The Story Of Christianity in Britain

E. Lamerton

OUTLINES OF . . .
THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY
IN BRITAIN . . . .

ARREST OF TYNDALE.

OUTLINES OF THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN

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THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN.

CHAP. I.

THE FAITH IN EARLY DAYS.

THE first authentic records we have of Ancient Britain come to us from the *Commentaries* of Julius Cæsar. This ambitious conqueror, not content with his successes over the fierce and warlike tribes on the continent of Europe, sought to add a new province to the Roman Empire in the neighbouring island of "Britannia."

When Cæsar landed in Britain he found that the only religion of our forefathers—if religion it could be called—was that taught by the Druid Priests who had much influence over the people. The places where they practised their superstitious rites were usually enclosures of vast unhewn stones arranged in a circle, situated in the centre of dark forests where human victims bled under the sacrificial knife of the priest. Some fragments of these enclosures may still

be seen on Salisbury Plain, and at Stennis in Orkney. So cruel and bloody were their rites, that even the merciless Roman conquerors speak of them with horror.

Soon Cæsar had to withdraw his legions to take part in the great struggle with Pompey, which convulsed the Roman world; and nearly a hundred years passed away before the Imperial power again succeeded in establishing a footing in our island. It was only after many battles and much hard fighting that some of the tribes were subdued, and even then they were ready to break out into insurrection at the first opportunity.

Following their usual custom, the Roman generals sent some of the principal men as hostages to Rome for the good behaviour of the rest of the nation, and we read of a Welsh chieftain, named Brian, who was in Rome during the time the Apostle Paul was in the Imperial city.

We know from Scripture that there were many Christians in Rome at that time, and it is very possible that in his enforced sojourn in a strange land, the heart of this chief might be turned from his idol gods to know and love the true God.

We hear of this same Brian some time afterwards preaching Christ in his own country, and of the conversion of a native prince named Lucius. But whoever the servant was that braved the dangers of this primitive missionary journey to the *ultima thule* of the Roman empire, we know that there were many little com-

panies of believers in Britain as early as the second century.

The tidings of Christ crucified had spread more quickly over the country than the arms of the Roman Emperors, and many followers of Christ were found beyond the walls of Adrian, where the ancient and mystical Druid worship, with its cruel and bloody ceremonies, was rapidly giving place to the knowledge of the Prince of Peace. But in every age "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," and these early saints were to be no exception. The Roman Emperors, tolerant to nearly all other religions, made special efforts to rid the world of Christianity. In the first century Nero put many Christians to death under circumstances of the greatest cruelty and insult.

At the close of the century, under Domitian, we find that persecution had extended to Spain. The humane Nerva, who succeeded to the purple in 96, issued a pardon for those who had never been guilty, and Christians enjoyed a short respite till the beginning of the second century when the warlike Trajan meditated the extinction of the name. With such edicts in force we can hardly expect that the British Christians would escape, but when the relentless and prolonged persecution under Diocletian commenced, no part of the Empire was unvisited. The most ingenious and fiendish devices were used to torture as well as to slay all who refused to sacrifice to the gods. At no time previously had

so determined and systematic an attempt been made to root out Christianity, and so complete was supposed to be the destruction of believers in Christ that coins were struck and inscriptions set up to declare that "the Christian superstitions had been rooted out, and the worship of the gods restored by Diocletian."

Some idea of the rapid increase of the Christian faith and also of the awful barbarity of pagan Rome may be gathered from the fact that during these persecutions over 750,000 Christians in one province alone perished by various kinds of cruel deaths. In Britain many Christians in the South fled from the cruelty of civilised Rome to the uncivilised and unconquered part of the island, and among the rude tribes then inhabiting Scotland they lived and taught the faith of Jesus. The lives of virtue and holiness led by these pious men, who came to be known as Culdees, led many of the pagans to forsake their sacred oaks and bloodstained altars to become disciples of the gospel.

In France where the mild Constantius Chlorus ruled, the followers of Jesus found some respite. Several Christians were found among his own household, and when the persecuting edict arrived, to test them, he ordered all who would not retract to quit his service. But the result was contrary to all expectation. He retained all who held fast to their faith, and dismissed the apostates, remarking that men who were unfaithful to God would also be so to their Prince. Constantius Chlorus dying at York in 306,

Constantine, his son, succeeded him, and in the war that ensued was finally successful in putting down all his enemies, and became sole Emperor both of the East and West.

The Empire, which had previously been divided among two Emperors and two Cæsars, was now firmly united in one hand. Constantine was prudent enough to see that in Rome at least, paganism was getting obsolete, and that by patronising Christianity he would forward his own political designs. The result of this we shall soon see. Outwardly it seemed a great thing that the Emperor should favour the Christians, but the Christians forgot that "the friendship of this world is enmity with God," and leaving the simple teaching of the Word of God, which says, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (see Matt. xxiii. 11), individuals sought after place and power, exalting themselves to bear rule over their brethren.

One has said, "There was no plainer proof how completely the Church had fallen through forgetfulness of the Lord's name than when it accepted the Emperor's terms and the patronage of the world. The Church had been called out to be the standing witness of these two things—first, of the world's ruin; and secondly, of God's love. But when we see the Church shaking hands with the world all is gone, and the Church slips down into the mind of the age."

Constantine next proceeded to arrange the affairs of the Church *after the pattern*

VIEW OF STONEHENGE: DRUID'S TEMPLE.

of the State, nominating the bishops of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, *Patriarchs* with revenues to support their new dignities. Sumptuous buildings were erected as Churches after the pattern of Solomon's temple. Honours and emoluments were heaped upon the pastors. Henceforth, pride and ambition in the hearts of the bishops led them to occupy themselves with the world, anxious to procure advancement, forgetting the Divine command, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The doctrine of real conversion was also being lost sight of, while the mere external rite of baptism was taking the place of the inward work of the Holy Spirit.

We have digressed for a moment to tell of this sad degeneracy in the East and in Italy, that the position of the Church of Rome may be better understood when she appears at a later period in our story. But as yet the Christians in Britain enjoyed little benefit from this State leniency. Their rulers, when not employed in settling civil dissensions, were called upon to repel the fierce inroads of the savage tribes on their borders.

The Picts from the Highlands of Scotland, and the Scots from Ireland, devastated the more settled part of the country wherever they came, putting the inhabitants to the sword or carrying them away into slavery. One of the captives thus enslaved was at a future day to become a useful missionary, and

so interesting is the story that we give it in detail.

On the wooded banks of the Clyde, not far from where the City of Glasgow now stands, there was born in the year 377—or as some say, 387—a little boy named Succath. His father Calpurnius was a farmer, and also a deacon of the Church at Bonavern, where his farm was, and seems to have been a simple-hearted, pious, Christian man.

As the little boy grew up, his father, and especially his mother Conchessa, diligently taught him the truths of Christianity, and sought to instil into his mind the knowledge of the true faith, warning him to beware of the idolatrous rites which prevailed in many places around them; Scotland, at this time, like Athens of old, being almost "wholly given to idolatry." Succath, like many other little boys, often paid little heed to the earnest teachings of his parents, and liked better to be the leader in the fun and mischief of his companions, than listen to the story of the Saviour's love. The time was coming however, when he was to remember and profit by these lessons. In due season the good seed so prayerfully sown would spring up and bear fruit an hundredfold. How important to learn the truths of Scripture while young! Timothy was commended because from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Thy Word is

a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

One day when Succath was about sixteen years of age, he and his two sisters were playing near the shore, when an Irish pirate chieftain, named O'Neale, made a descent on the coast near Bonavern, and carried them off, along with a number of others, to be sold for slaves. You can imagine how sad his kind parents would be to lose all their children in one day, but these were common occurrences in those lawless times.

Succath was carried to Ireland, sold to the chief of a pagan clan, and like the prodigal of old, he was sent into the fields to feed swine. It was now in his solitude and sorrow that the lessons his pious mother Conchessa had taught him came back to his mind, and as he thought thereon he wept.

"I was sixteen years old," he says, "and knew not the true God, but in that strange land the Lord opened mine eyes, and although late, I called my sins to mind and was converted to the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and consoled me as a father consoles his children. During the night, in the forests and on the mountains where I kept my flocks, the rain and snow and frost which I endured led me to seek after God."

After six years' captivity Succath succeeded in effecting his escape and rejoining his parents in France whither they had removed after the loss of their children. But his mind was often occupied with

the cruel and bloody rites he had witnessed with abhorrence among the pagan Irish, and he now felt the desire to go back to Ireland and tell them the story of the love of Jesus which he had learned whilst a captive in their midst. His parents and friends tried to dissuade him, but with his heart full of the grace of Christ, he tore himself away. As he says, "It was not done in mine own strength; it was God who overcame all."

Soon afterwards he set out for Ireland, and among his other possessions he carried a big drum. A strange thing for a missionary to have, you will think; but with his big drum he collected the people of a district into the fields and preached to them Jesus. Among his converts was a chieftain named Benignus who became a faithful helper and a powerful protector to his teacher. In a large barn belonging to this chief, meetings were held every day, to which the people came in crowds, and at which many were converted. The gospel story of the love of God was indeed good news to those poor people, whose only idea of religion was to propitiate their gods, whom they believed to be as fierce, cruel, and vindictive as they were themselves, and to whom human sacrifices were often offered up in the endeavour to appease their wrath or procure their favour. Truly "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

Succath—or as he was afterwards called, Patrick, and to whose name, like that of other servants of Christ, many

foolish and superstitious stories have been attached—travelled over a great part of Ireland, and many little companies were brought to the knowledge of the true faith. After labouring for thirty years he died near Downpatrick, and we shall see in another chapter how Ireland repaid her debt by sending missionaries to Scotland when the light of truth in that country had waxed dim indeed.

About the time that Patrick was labouring in Ireland another devoted missionary named Ninian was evangelising among the Picts and the lowland tribes in Scotland. Ninian was a Briton of noble birth, who had been educated in Rome, and returning to his native land gave up the ease and luxury of his position and went forth to preach the Gospel. His labours appear to have begun in Cumbria—then a large province embracing Cumberland, in England, and several shires in the south of Scotland—and to have extended as far north as the Grampian Hills.

At Whithorn, in Galloway, he built a little church of "wood and earth," believed to have been the first building of the kind in Scotland. Making this his head-quarters, he made missionary tours through his extensive "parish," preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants wherever he came. He died in Wigtownshire about 430.

We know little of either the successes or failures of these ancient missionaries. Great difficulties they must have had to encounter and much opposition to over-

come, but He who was for them was greater than he who was against them, and, their labours done, they have passed hence to their reward.

LANDING OF AUGUSTINE.

CHAP. II.

PIONEER MISSIONARIES.

When the Romans came to Britain faithful servants of Jesus Christ were to be found in many of the legions, but with the Roman power came also the state religion of ancient Rome, which was paganism. A stately temple to Diana was erected on the spot where St. Paul's Cathedral now stands, another to Apollo on the site now occupied by Westminster Abbey. We hear little of Christianity during this period, save that the followers of Jesus were often confronted with the choice—"Christ or Diana?" and that many loved not their lives unto death, we learn from Bede, who tells us that "about this time suffered Aron and Julius, citizens of Chester, and many more of both sexes in several places, who after enduring sundry torments, and having their limbs

torn after an unheard-of manner, sent their souls to the joys of the heavenly city."

After Constantine's profession of Christianity legalised persecution ceased for a time. Under Julian the Apostate, pagan Rome put forth its last efforts to attain that supremacy it had previously enjoyed.

Julian set himself to uproot Christianity and reform paganism. He attempted the impossible task of destroying Christian *principles*, and yet maintaining Christian *practice*. So great was his hatred of the Christian religion that he tried to make the words which the Lord Jesus uttered concerning Jerusalem false, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Julian determined to rebuild it. He had three objects to live for: the restoration of idolatry; the rebuilding of Jerusalem; and the conquest of Persia. After a short reign of one year and eight months he lay dying on the sands of Persia with all his schemes unaccomplished. As his life ebbed away through the wound inflicted by a Persian lance, he filled his hand with the blood and casting it into the air, exclaimed, "O GALILEAN, THOU HAST CONQUERED." The temple is still unbuilt; the cause of God still survives. Julian died a solemn illustration of Isa xlv. 9, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker."

The Roman power was now on the decline. In 420 the last of the legions

were withdrawn from Britain to defend the more central parts of the Empire frequently assailed by the barbarous hordes ever on its borders. The inhabitants under the Roman rule had become weak and servile, and thus easily fell a prey to the next invaders, the "Franks" and "Saxons," who, with their pirate galleys, made frequent descents on the sea coasts, and even carried their inroads far inland.

In 446 an appeal, called "The Groans of the Britons," was sent to the "Great Patrician" Aetius, desiring "ayde and comforte from the daungier of strange enemies," but Aetius needed all his legionaries to conquer the fierce Attila and his savage Huns, and could give them no assistance. Vortigern, one of the British kings, made an alliance with the Angles and Saxons to assist him against the inroads of the Picts and Scots; but instead of allies the Anglo-Saxons soon became masters, and their successes tempted other bodies of German invaders to follow. These newcomers were more barbarous than Imperial Rome. They drove out the inhabitants wherever they came, compelling them either to become their slaves, or else retire to more remote parts of the country. Pagans themselves, they treated everything pertaining to Christ or Christianity with special ferocity. Preachers and people were slain with indiscriminate cruelty, and churches were razed to the ground.

These savage wars gave little oppor-

tunity for the early British Church to extend its influence over these fierce marauders, even if the conquerors had not treated with contempt everything belonging to the conquered. Thus we find that during the fifth century the Christians in the south were gradually driven back into the mountains of Wales and the wild moors of Northumberland, and, although isolated Christian families could be found here and there, paganism again overspread the land, and idol temples arose to the heathen gods in many places, where previously the true God had been known and worshipped. Our names for the days of the week still preserve a remembrance of these idol gods. Sunday is from the sun, Monday from the moon, Tuesday from their hero-god Tuisco, Wednesday from Woden or Odin, the god of war, Thursday from their chief god Thor, the thunderer, and so on.

For many years after the withdrawal of the Romans little is known of the religious history of Britain.

Civil wars among the various petty chiefs were the principal events. Christianity existed, but ofttimes it was swept back by the tide of paganism, as in some predatory excursion the "priests" of one tribe were murdered by the soldiers of another, who, ascribing their victory to their idol gods, reared again their fallen altars and deserted shrines. Afterwards, when peace had been restored, some Christian missionary would be found brave and zealous enough to rear again

the banner of the cross, and go forth with his life in his hand preaching the gospel. Thus the contest went on, but the light was slowly penetrating the darkness; the truth was the stronger, and would triumph in the end.

One of the missionaries who went forth as a light-bearer in these dark days was called Kentigern. He was born about 514 in Culross, and the scene of his first labours was at Cathures (now Glasgow). But on the accession of a new king to the throne of Cumbria, Kentigern had to flee for his life, and take refuge in Wales. When the Christian king Ryderech ascended the throne, Kentigern was invited to return, and the old writer goes on to tell us that he abode in "a town called Glesgu, now called Glasgu, where he united himself to a family of servants of God who lived after the fashion of the primitive Church in holy discipline and Divine service."

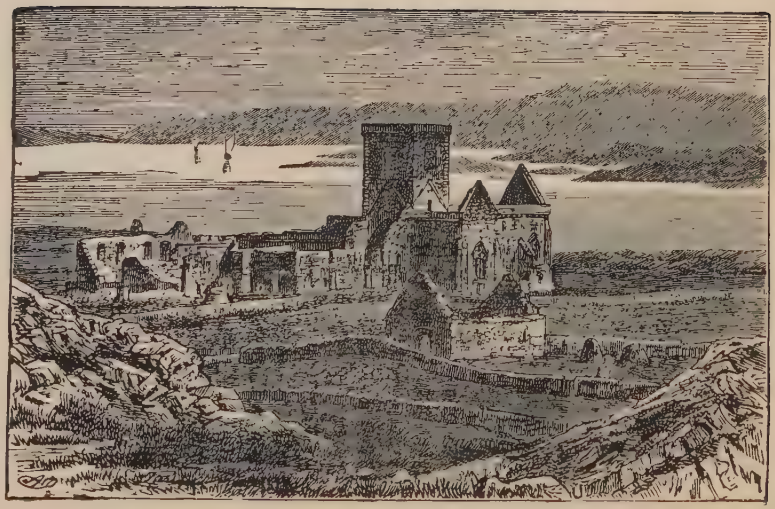
While Kentigern was labouring in the south, another missionary, named Columba, in Ireland was preparing to visit the western shores of Scotland. Several fellow-Christians, imbued with his zeal, volunteered to accompany him, and, setting sail in their *currach* of osiers and skins, they reached the island of Iona in 565. Here they erected their humble settlement of wattles, and from thence set forth to evangelise the rude Picts in their vicinity. Columba's efforts were directed towards the northern Picts, beyond the Grampians, where, as far as

we know, the Gospel had not as yet penetrated. The brethren led lives of the greatest simplicity, and Columba, like Jacob of old, is said to have slept on the bare ground, with a stone for his pillow. A man of remarkable activity, he sought to use every moment for the glory of God. He read, wrote, and taught; he preached, prayed, and visited from house to house, and from tribe to tribe, and soon fruits of his service began to appear. The king of the Picts was converted and many of his people. A school was established in Iona, where the Word of God was studied, and through the living Word many were born from above. The young men of Caledonia were taught that "the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith." "Throw aside all merit of works," said he, "and look for salvation to the grace of God alone. Beware of a religion which consists of outward observances: it is better to keep your heart pure before God than to abstain from meats. One alone is your head, Jesus Christ."

Soon the true instinct of a living Church arose. The young men who had learned the gospel in the school of Iona desired to spread the knowledge of Jesus Christ in other lands. Kneeling in the chapel of Iona, they were set apart by the laying on of the hands of the brethren, and they went forth with their blessings and their prayers. Often in cruel persecutions, often in jeopardy of their lives, these devoted missionaries travelled

through the Low Countries, Gaul, Switzerland, and Germany, preaching the Word of God to the barbarous and unsettled tribes who at that time inhabited those countries. Nor were they afraid of the wild Atlantic billows, but crossed over in their frail boats to the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and even found their way to Iceland, ever seeking to preach the Gospel in regions beyond. Often "in perils by the heathen, in perils by the wilderness, in weariness and painfulness," only the love of Christ constraining them could have carried them on, only the power of Christ could have sustained them. They sought not for worldly place and power, for advancement and riches, but were content with little of this world's goods, if only they might induce their hearers to "turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven."

Hardships and adventures were every-day occurrences in the lives of these men. Often their way lay over bleak and rugged mountains, or through dark and pathless forests abounding with wild beasts, and sometimes with men still more fierce and wild. Often they were in danger of suffering and death from the hands of the very men to whom they came with the word of life. At times they were exposed to the fury of the white-robed Druid priest whose pagan rites and worship they condemned; or again, driven with scorn from the doors of the proud chieftain, they turned aside to the humble hut of the serf, and there



RUINS IN IONA.

told out in simple language to their rustic audience the old, old story of the love of Jesus.

We cannot but admire the zeal and earnestness of these early pioneers of mission enterprise. Their teaching was derived direct from the Scriptures, and they went forth with the Gospel, because they believed the Gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

But we have come to a period when another system was to usurp their place, and enter into their labours — when popery like a dark cloud was about to overshadow the land with its baneful influence, and eclipse for a time the light of truth.

In the fifth century Pope Leo I. had already laid what has been called the foundation stone of the papal supremacy, by introducing *private confession to the priests*, who were empowered to grant absolution, or impose penances at will, thus blasphemously taking the place of the one Mediator, Christ Jesus, who alone has power on earth to forgive sins.

Men were taught to hand over their consciences to the keeping of the priests. The priests, in their eagerness to multiply converts, lost the true idea of conversion, and, instead of looking for the fruits of righteousness which the Holy Spirit alone can produce, they were willing to accept a mere nominal assent to doctrines and ceremonies of man's making. Thus men had a name to

live but were dead, and the whole became merely a worldly organisation, destitute alike of both life and practice.

Succeeding occupants of the papal chair continued this worldly policy because by it their revenues were increased, and, though living in luxury and sensuality, they were ever on the outlook for some new field over which they might extend their dominions, and arrogate to themselves both the spiritual and temporal sovereignty wherever they came.

In 590 Gregory I. was elected to the pontifical chair, and at once decided on his long intended mission to Britain. Some time previously he had seen some youths exposed for sale in the slave market at Rome, and being pleased with their handsome appearance, he made inquiries and learned that they were Anglo-Saxon prisoners of war whose country was still pagan. Henceforth Gregory's desire was to bring Britain under the power of the Church of Rome. In 596 a monk named Augustine, attended with forty others, set forth on this mission and landed on the Isle of Thanet in Kent.

Augustine is said to have possessed even to a greater degree than Gregory himself "a mixture of ambition and devotedness, superstition and piety, cunning and zeal. He thought that faith and holiness were less essential to the Church than authority and power, and that its prerogative was not so much to save souls as to collect all the human race under the authority of Rome." Even

Gregory himself took notice of his spiritual pride and exhorted him to humility.

England at this time was divided into the Saxon Heptarchy, or Seven Kingdoms, and, having landed in the Kingdom of Kent, the monks desired an interview with King Ethelbert, whose wife, Bertha, seems to have been a real Christian. The King decided to receive them in the open air, and took his stand under a large oak tree, while the monks, to make as much show as possible, approached, bearing a huge crucifix at the head of the procession. The King was sufficiently impressed to allow them the use of an ancient British chapel near Canterbury, and not long afterwards was converted—to the Church of Rome at least—by the eloquent appeals of Augustine. This event greatly helped on the work among his people, and ten thousand pagans were baptised in the Swale in one day. But alas! what shall we say of such conversions? There was little "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Little of that real work of the Spirit in which, on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were pricked in their hearts, and said, "What shall we do?" The aim of Rome has ever been to make nominal converts to the aggrandisement of the Papal See, and such continues to the present day to be the false and unscriptural practice of Romish missionaries in heathen lands. See to it, my reader, that you are not only a nominal Christian but a *real*

Christian; forgiven, saved, justified, and on your way to Heaven—made *fit* by the blood of Christ, and made *sure* by the Word of God.

Augustine "converted" the heathen temples by washing the walls with "holy water," erecting "altars," and substituting "holy relics" for the images of the heathen gods.

His next object was to win over the original British Churches, and, to this end, he appointed a conference and demanded them to submit to the government of Rome.

The British Christians were firm in their refusal. "We desire to love all men," meekly replied Dionoth, a faithful teacher from Bangor, "and what we do for you we will do for him whom you call the Pope, but he is not entitled to call himself *father of fathers;* we know no master but Christ."

Augustine summoned another conference in 601, and again demanded the British Churches to submit to Rome, but Dionoth again resisted with firmness and success, and was supported by Dagam, one of the Scotch representatives from Iona, who refused even to eat bread with the Romans. But the pretensions of Rome were gaining ground. Much of the truth which had been so faithfully taught from Iona was already lost sight of, and the minds of the British Christians finally became unsettled as to whether they were right in their opposition. They visited a pious Christian teacher who led a solitary life, and asked him if they

should continue to resist Augustine or follow him.

"If he is a man of God, follow him."

"And how shall we know that?" they replied.

"If he is meek and humble of heart, he bears Christ's yoke; but, if he is violent and proud, he is not of God."

"What sign shall we have of his humility?"

"If he rises from his seat to receive you when you enter the room."

They departed for the Council, and entered the hall, but the Romish Archbishop, desirous of showing his superiority, proudly kept his seat. Again the British protested against the papal supremacy—"We will have no master but Christ." Augustine was incensed. "If you will not receive brethren who bring you peace, you shall receive enemies who bring you war," he said. He comes out here in his true character. Argument had failed: now for the sword. The first thing that British Christians receive, either from Pagan Rome or Papal Rome, is alike—persecution.

Augustine died in 604, but the spirit of persecution survived, and the influence of the priests over even pagan kings was always used against the British. Twelve hundred were murdered near Bangor in one day, in a place where they were gathered together for prayer, by Edelfrid, one of the Anglo-Saxon kings; and soon the light of primitive Christianity was almost extinguished in Britain. Only in Iona the Christians still continued to hold

fast the truth, and missionaries went forth through the various Saxon Kingdoms in England preaching the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Northumberland at this time reigned King Oswy, an ambitious and unprincipled man, who determined to add to his territories at the expense of his neighbours. He first treacherously murdered his relative, Oswin, King of Deira, and also usurped the throne of Mercia after King Peada had been slain in a conspiracy got up by his wife, Oswy's daughter, and thus succeeded by craft and cruelty in uniting nearly all England into one kingdom. He now called a conference, and, professing to be won over by the priests, exclaimed, "Peter is the doorkeeper, I will obey him." Such was the character of the man who became Rome's convert and handed over the liberties of England to the Pope.

The priests knew what to make of their victory, and soon all England was under the domination of the Papal See. The Pope wrote to Oswy and sent him, not copies of the Holy Scriptures alas! but "relics of the saints," and for nearly seven hundred years England, which had refused the light, was given over to darkness, and made to groan under the spiritual despotism of a false Church which made merchandise of the bodies and souls of men.

In the East, also, the minds of men were groping in darkness. Mohammed, born in 570, was at this time propagating his dark delusion by fire and sword.

Neither the legions of Rome nor the trained warriors of Persia could withstand the fierce onslaughts of the Moslem hordes, who rushed eagerly to the fight, fondly believing that those who fell in battle went straight to Paradise. Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Persia, and Northern Africa were rapidly overrun. By the Straits of Gibraltar they entered Spain, which was subdued after desperate fighting, in which its king was slain.

Crossing the Pyrenean mountains they invaded France, but were met near Tours 752 by Charles Martel at the head of the armies of Europe, and defeated after a battle which lasted six days.

It is impossible to enumerate the havoc and slaughter perpetrated by these fanatical warriors. The countries along the shores of Northern Africa contained an immense number of Christian congregations, with many bishops and pastors. These were almost entirely swept away. In the twelve years after the death of Mohammed it is estimated that his successors conquered 36,000 towns and villages; destroyed 4000 Christian Churches, putting to death all who opposed them or refused to become Mohammedans, and so successfully has this "mission" been carried on since, that there are now about two hundred and six millions of our fellow-men who are followers of the doctrine of that false prophet. But Europe was saved from the ravages of the Moslems only to become the prey of popery, which rapidly developed its anti-Christian principles and practices during

the dark ages. How true it is that "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Let us see to it that we value the privileges we enjoy. Living in a professing Christian land and having an open Bible telling us of the love of God to lost sinners in sending His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him; surely if we neglect so great salvation we will indeed be without excuse.

R.P.

CHAP. III.

THE FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE.

At the close of the seventh century, those British Christians, who had offered so determined an opposition to Rome, were won over, one by one, until, even in the original settlement of Iona, they agreed to recognise the papal supremacy.

Henceforth, instead of the humble preachers of Iona who went forth taking nothing from any man, but preaching the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, Rome brought in her rites and ceremonies, relics and superstitions. Every effort was used to enslave men's minds and keep them in ignorance, while at the same time everything Rome supplied had to be bought with money. A writer on the subject has said, "Not an article was there in her creed, not a ceremony in her

worship, not a department in her government that did not tend to advance her power and increase her gain. Her dogmas, rites, and orders were so many pretexts for exacting money. Images, purgatory, relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees, canonisations, miracles, and masses were but taxes under another name, . . . so many drains for conveying the substance of the nations to Rome." And another says, "Rome takes your gold and gives you nothing more solid in return than words." How different to all this is "the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord." Without money and without price, He invites sinners to come and take of the water of life *freely*. How thankful we should be that we have an open Bible that tells us of the free grace of God.

But the tyranny of Rome was wearing to a close. Though she knew it not, the time had nearly come when God would raise up a man to give to Britain that best of all gifts—a Bible in her own language. That man was John Wycliffe, born in 1324 in the North Riding of Yorkshire. He became a student of Merton College, Oxford, and was converted to God when about twenty-four years of age. He had found the way of life in the Holy Scriptures, and determined to show it to others. In 1365 he was elected warden of Canterbury College, and continued to preach the doctrine of free grace with much power.

Let us now digress for a moment to

trace shortly the following events which brought Wycliffe forward as the determined opposer of the Pope in his demands on the State, and led him to take up higher ground and oppose Rome's usurped control over the conscience.

In 1213 King John had yielded up "England and Ireland to St. Peter, St. Paul, and Pope Innocent III." He had laid his crown at the feet of Pandulf, the Pope's legate, who is said to have kicked and rolled it in the dust as a worthless bauble, and consented to allow John to resume it on the annual payment of 1000 marks (£666, 13s. 4d.) to Rome and to become the Pope's vassal. This payment had been very irregularly made when in the time of Edward III., after a period of thirty-five years, in which it had never been mentioned, Pope Urban V. summoned Edward to recognise him as King of England and renew the annual tribute. But King Edward III. was no weakling like King John. The conqueror of Crecy was little likely to yield to this insolent demand, and summoned his Parliament to support him. The Parliament agreed with the king, and enlightened by the lucid and scriptural arguments of Wycliffe, declared against the Pope. The partisans of Rome were infuriated, and declared that by the canon law of the Church the king ought to be deprived of his fief. "The canon law," said Wycliffe, "has no force when it is opposed to the Word of God."

But God had more important work for

Wycliffe than mere worldly politics, and, having been presented by the king with the living of Lutterworth, he set about preaching the gospel in his parish with his usual activity. At Oxford he lectured to the students as one "having authority;" for, while others taught from the *sentences* of Peter Lombard, or the mystical philosophy of Duns Scotos, he opened up the Scriptures and showed that they were indeed spirit and life. He accused the clergy of having banished the Holy Scriptures, and demanded that the authority of the Word of God should be re-established over the conscience.

These things were not looked upon by his enemies with indifference, and he who would dare to attack the papacy in such high-handed fashion must be dealt with. In 1377 the Pope issued a Bull, enjoining the English clergy to crush this formidable heresy—for such the teaching of the Scriptures was called—and take immediate steps to silence the author of it "by arresting the said John Wycliffe and shutting him up in prison." The clergy needed little incentive. Courtney, bishop of London, had begun the prosecution before the Bull arrived, and cited Wycliffe to appear and answer for his teaching. An immense crowd thronged the approaches to St. Paul's Cathedral as Wycliffe appeared to attend the convocation. Hands were raised to do violence to the venerable old man, and loud hootings from the partisans of the priests re-echoed through the building. With Wycliffe, however, came John of

Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Lord Percy, Earl Marshal of England. Having two such powerful friends, Courtney could do little but show his hatred by railing at the bold preacher, and the assembly broke up in confusion.

Next year the Bull arrived, and Wycliffe was cited to appear before the bishops at Lambeth Palace. This time no John of Gaunt appeared to protect him, and his patron King Edward was dead. The human arm was withdrawn that his faith and hope might be in God. The sitting was scarcely opened when Sir Lewis Clifford entered with a dispatch from the queen-mother to forbid the court, "as the Pope's brief could have no authority in the realm of England without the consent of the king." Thus a second time he was preserved from his enemies to continue his work for God. Before retiring he handed in a protest, setting forth the teaching of Scripture as opposed to the errors of Rome, and, "In the first place," said he, "I am resolved with my whole heart, by the grace of God, to live as a sincere Christian, and, while my life shall last, to profess and defend the truth of Christ as far as I have power." Shortly afterwards, Wycliffe, while still continuing his teaching at Oxford, fell suddenly and dangerously ill. He was now an old man, and his incessant labours, with the persistent and harassing persecutions he was called upon to bear, had told upon a constitution never very strong. The monks, whose vices and ignorance he had so scathingly

exposed, were delighted. They would now get rid of their enemy, but greater would be their victory if they could get him to recant. A deputation of four waited upon him and urged him to retract all he had said against them. But Wycliffe had been too much convinced of the truth of what he taught in health to retract it in sickness. Raising himself on his couch, he replied in an emphatic voice, "I shall not die but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars." They left the room in confusion, and Wycliffe recovered to continue his work. Not content with his own efforts, he sent forth the most earnest of his disciples to preach the gospel all over the land, and "seek to convert souls to Jesus Christ." The missionaries Rome sent forth were the begging friars, who strolled over the country filling their wallets, and, in place of preaching the Word of Life, told stupid and foolish legends about the lives of the "saints," or amused the people by stories of Sinon and the wooden horse, from the Trojan war; afterwards wasting their time in the alehouses or at the gaming tables.

Wycliffe's "poor priests," as they were called, went forth barefoot, staff in hand, taking nothing of any man but sufficient for their daily bread, and visiting the sick, the aged, the poor, and the blind. They became favourites among the people, who gladly listened to them and drank in the good news so long hid, but which, like old wells re-

opened, gave forth abundant refreshment to all who would come and drink. The clergy had recourse to their usual weapon—persecution, and got a law passed commanding every king's officer to arrest the preachers and commit them and their followers to prison. The monks watched their opportunity, and when the humble evangelist began to preach they set off for assistance, but when the officers appeared, led on by the priests, a body of stout men stood forth, surrounded their preacher, protected him from the violence of the clergy, and carried him off in safety. Thus, day by day the work went on, and the light was penetrating into every part of the country. When persecuted in one place the devoted missionaries fled to another, and, whether seated by the cottage hearth or preaching to the crowds at the crossways, to the few as to the many, they spoke of full and free salvation by grace alone, not of work, lest any man should boast.

It has ever been the policy of Rome to withhold the Bible from the people. The teaching of the Church of Rome is at utter variance with the teaching of Scripture, and when the light of the truth contained in the Word of God shines out, all the fabric of superstition, built upon a foundation of ignorance, falls to pieces. Accordingly the priests forbade all laymen under pain of death to read the Scriptures, and told the people to "learn to believe in the Church rather than in the Gospel."

John Wycliffe, both in his contro-

versies with the priests, and in his preaching to the people, ever appealed to the Holy Scripture as the sole source of authority.

The ignorant and dissolute priests and monks both hated and feared him, while by the common people he was loved and honoured because he taught them in their own tongue the pure Gospel of the grace of God.

Not content with publicly preaching the Word, he determined to give the people a translation of the Bible in their own language, and this great work he completed about the year 1380. Previous attempts at Bible translation had been made, but with only partial success. King Alfred, with the help of learned men, began a translation, but dying soon after, the work was stopped. Bede, in the eighth century, had translated the Gospel of John, and is said to have expired as he finished the last verse. But these copies, even if any now existed, were only fragmentary and out of reach of the common people.

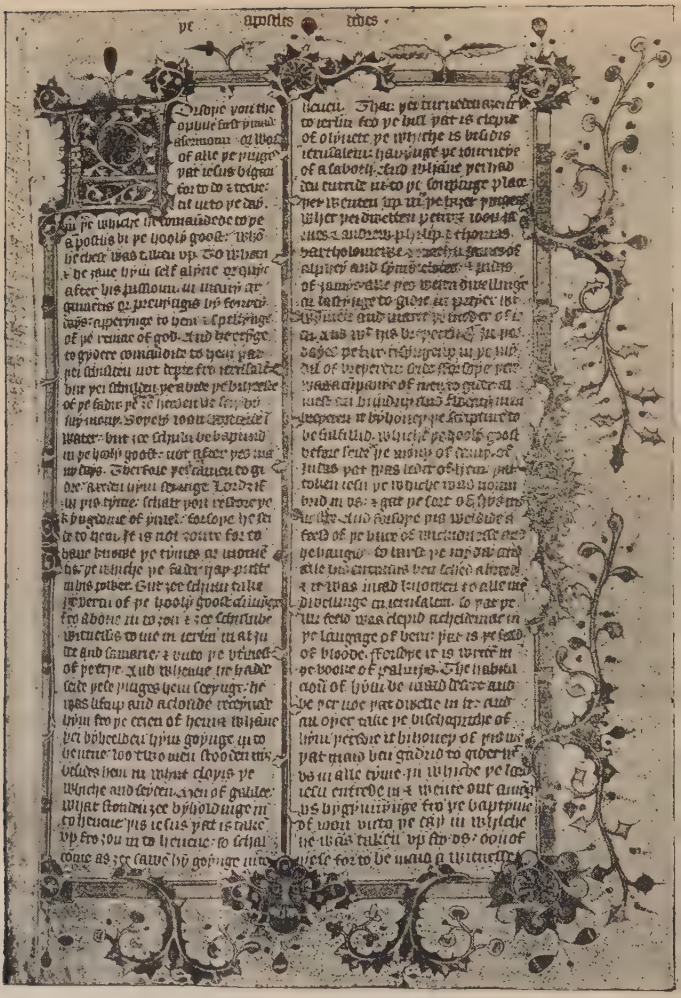
In his quiet retreat at Lutterworth, after nearly fifteen years' labour, he succeeded in finishing his translation from the Latin Vulgate into the English tongue. There are still several copies of Wycliffe's Bible in the principal libraries, and one in the British Museum is believed to have been written by Wycliffe himself. Here is a specimen of the language in which the Scriptures were read in the fourteenth century; it is a passage from Luke's Gospel in Wycliffe's translation—

"In the days of Eroude Kyng of Judee ther was a prest Zacarye by name: of the sort of Abia, and his wyfe was of the doughtris of Aaron; and hir name was Elizabeth; an bothe weren juste bifore God: goynge in alle the maundementis and justifyingis of the Lord withouten playnt."

Here is another curious specimen from the time of King Alfred—

"On fruman waes Word, and thaet Word mid Gode, and Gode waes thaet Word. Thaet waes on fruman mid Gode. Elle thing waeron geworht thurh hyne; and nanthing waes geworht buttan him. Thaet waes lif the on him geworht waes, and thaet lif waes manna leoht. And thaet leoth lyht on thystrum; and thystro thaet ne gena-mon."

Wycliffe's translation was completed, but there were then no printing presses and no great publishing houses; however there was a real desire for the Word of God, and soon many expert hands were engaged in multiplying copies which were eagerly bought up by the people. They had been taught that there was a graduated series of monks, priests, popes, and "saints," between them and God, but by the Scriptures they learned that there is only "one Meditator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." Rome taught that redemption was to be purchased by paying the priests for masses. The Scriptures declare, "We have redemption through *His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." That "by Him all that believe are justified from all things



FACSIMILE PAGE OF WYCLIFFE'S BIBLE.

from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Thus the glorious light of God's Word chased away the errors and darkness of Rome, as the morning mists disappear before the rising sun.

The people rejoiced. The clergy mourned. Their gains were in danger. Who would buy worthless masses when they had an open Bible? But they did not long remain inactive; Wycliffe had attacked transubstantiation, which, ever since it had been invented by the monk Radbertus in the ninth century, had been a powerful engine in the hands of the clergy over the people; accordingly he was suspended from teaching at Oxford and expelled from the University, but he appealed to the Parliament, and meantime he retired to his parish of Lutterworth, from which the priests could not as yet expel him, because it was the gift of the king.

Here he spent a few quiet months until Parliament re-opened in November, when, instead of coming forward to defend himself from the priests, he came forward to attack in the face of the whole nation "the corruption, tyranny, and errors of the hierarchy." Parliament repealed the persecuting edict, and thus once again God shielded and preserved His servant against the hatred and malice of his enemies.

Wat Tyler's insurrectionary followers had seized and beheaded Sudbury, the Primate, and Courtney, now Archbishop of Canterbury and "Primate of all

England," would see if in that capacity he could not accomplish the destruction of the man he considered his enemy. Assembling a convocation at Oxford, he summoned Wycliffe once more to appear. Would he come? He came. It was to be his last appearance before either kings or councils—his last public testimony for the truth of Christ. The indictment was read, and he rose to reply. As of old, he refuted their charges, challenging them to convince him of error before they condemned his teaching. And growing bolder, his words glowing with eloquence and energy, he turned the accusation against themselves. "Ye are the heretics who teach your foolish traditions instead of the truth of Scripture. Why do you propagate such errors? Why, because like the priests of Baal, ye want to vend your masses. With whom think ye are ye contending? with an old man on the brink of the grave? No, with truth; truth which is stronger than you, and will overcome you." His enemies were astounded at his bold words, every one of which they knew to be true. He turned to leave the court, and no one attempted to hinder him. They allowed him to pass through their midst and go back to his beloved parish of Lutterworth.

Here he spent the few remaining days of his life in teaching and preaching Jesus Christ. His enemies intended to bring him to the stake, but God, who overruleth all things, frustrated their intentions. On the last Sunday of

December, in the year 1384, he was stricken down with paralysis in the midst of his beloved people. They carried him sorrowfully to his home, and tended him night and day, for they loved him as a father. Here he lingered till the last day of the month, and as the year was dying, he entered into rest.

After his death a petition was got up by those who opposed his work, and presented to the Pope (which however he refused), to have his body taken out of the grave and buried in a dunghill—so deep was the hatred of his enemies; and forty years afterwards his bones were actually dug up, burned to ashes, and cast into the river. The priests also excommunicated all who bought his books or tracts, and it was at a terrible risk they could be read.

Many men who were found by the priests with a copy of Wycliffe's Bible were burned to ashes at the stake with the book hung round their necks. Men, and women too, were executed for teaching their children in their mother-tongue the Ten Commandments or the Lord's Prayer. Children were forced to light the death fires around their parents; and the possessors of the Bible were hunted down and slain like wild beasts.

Old John Fox says, and we may well say the same, "Certes the zeal of these Christians seems much superior to this of our day, and to see their faithfulness may well shame our careless times."

Over a hundred years elapse before

we come to another version of the Bible in the English tongue, and any copies made during that period were laboriously written out by hand.

Yet, notwithstanding, copies increased; and though the price was about forty pounds a volume, and labourers' wages a penny a day, yet men denied themselves other things and bought them. Those who were not able to buy them, and had the opportunity, learned whole epistles off by heart, and recited them to the little gatherings who met in fear and trembling, and yet thirsting for the life-giving Word.

The Bible was to them a precious Book. Do we value it as we ought?

Wycliffe died, but the *fruit* of his great life-work remained. His followers took up the work where he laid it down, and assiduously sought to spread not only the truth of the Scriptures but copies of the Book itself wherever they found opportunity. They traversed the country preaching the Gospel, and many of the nobility, as well as the common people, gladly embraced the truth. Where the preacher could not enter, the Word of God often found a place, and Wycliffe's Testament was seen both in the castles of the nobles and the halls of the gentry. Soon men began to see the difference between the teaching of Rome and the teaching of Scripture, and in proportion as minds were enlightened by the Word of God, so were they set free from the bondage of

darkness which had hitherto enthralled them. But the persecuting Arundel was now Primate, and he, seeing the growth of the new opinions, posted off to Ireland, where King Richard II. then was, and entreated him to return and take measures to suppress the *Lollards*, as Wycliffe's followers now came to be called. Easily persuaded either to one side or the other, the weak king gave Arundel liberty to commence the persecution, and shortly afterwards set out to return to England, but before Richard set foot on his native shores another had arrived there before him who would contend with him both for place and power.

Henry of Lancaster, son of the famous Duke of Lancaster mentioned in a former paragraph, had been banished by Richard, but suddenly sailed from the Continent, landed in Yorkshire, and deposed Richard, who was imprisoned and starved to death in Pontefract Castle. The crafty and cunning Arundel, who had been wise enough to desert the losing side in time, now came forward (1399) and crowned the usurper as Henry IV. with the "Vial of oil which fell down from the Virgin Mary." The son of Wycliffe's protector was now king, but he had arrived at the throne by the murder of the rightful king and the help of the priests, and to maintain his usurpation he had to bind himself to "protect the Church." To protect the Church meant, in these days, to persecute every humble follower of Jesus who dared to

differ from Rome, and Henry was not long in making good his promise to the priests.

In his reign was passed the act ordering every heretic to be burned alive—a stain alike on his memory and the Statute Book. The priests, who can only be likened to blood-thirsty animals, were overjoyed. Hitherto their power was limited by the will of the king, now their persecution was *legalised*, and they hastened to satiate their cruelty on those who set at nought their traditions.

"I will worship Christ who died on the cross," said William Sawtre, "but not the cross on which Christ died." He was condemned to the fire by the primate, and handed over to the secular power, with the hypocritical request to treat him with *mercy*. A stake was planted at Smithfield, and he was burned alive in 1401—another martyr for the truth in England. John Badby was burned for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. William Thorpe was murdered in prison for refusing to worship images. Thus Rome has clearly shown how both in doctrine and practice she is at utter variance with the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The prisons in the bishops' houses were full to overflowing. Not only were they used as places of confinement, but they became dens of torture: fetters and the rack, thumb-screws and the "boot" were brought into requisition with fiendish ingenuity, and men "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might

obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." Very touching is the testimony of one who carved on the walls of his dungeon, "*Jesus amor meus*"—Jesus is my love. These words are said to be still seen on the walls of the Lollard's tower in Lambeth Palace.

Not only did the priests vent their rage on the humble and lowly, they proceeded against Lord Cobham, and succeeded in inducing the king to allow him to be brought to trial. Accordingly he was seized and imprisoned in the Tower. Brought before Arundel in 1413 he witnessed a good confession for Jesus Christ.

"We must believe what the Church of Rome teaches, whether Christ says so or not," said the primate.

"I am ready to believe all that God desires, but what is contrary to Scripture I can never believe," said Sir John. But he was before judges who knew no mercy, and he was sentenced to death and sent back to the Tower to prepare for the fire. "It is well," said he, "though you condemn my body, through the mercy of the eternal God you cannot harm my soul."

He escaped from the Tower at this time, but four years afterwards he was retaken and drawn on a hurdle through the streets of London to the place of suffering. With diabolical cruelty he was suspended in chains over the fire and *slowly* burned to death. Yet the Lord

stood by His servant and enabled him to endure this awful torture with constancy and firmness unto the end.

Space forbids any attempt to chronicle even the names of those, who, during this period, were called upon to seal their testimony with their blood, and though the hearts of many failed them before the fiery trial, yet the knowledge of the truth had been widely diffused by means of Wycliffe's New Testament, and the good seed thus sown brought forth fruit at a future day. We are accustomed to look upon Luther as the man whom God raised up to hold forth the lamp of truth in the middle ages, but over a hundred years before, the glorious truth of Salvation by grace was known in England; and Bohemia at the same period had its martyrs for Jesus Christ.

On the Continent at this time was seen the curious spectacle of *three* "infallible" popes, each striving to assert his supremacy at the expense of the other; as old John Fox says, "There were not three crowns on one pope's head, but three heads in one popish crown." The Council of Constance (1414) had been called to deal with these three rival "infallible" popes which Christendom had found to be very fallible indeed; these three, they deposed, and elected another "infallible" whom they styled Pope Martin V. Thereupon they cited before them John Huss who has been called the apostle of Bohemia, and though he came with a safe conduct from the Emperor "to go and return without let or

hindrance," yet the Emperor, won over by the priests, broke his most sacred promise and allowed Huss to be arrested and imprisoned. He was commanded to abjure his opinions and submit to the Church. "I would rather," said he, "that a millstone was hanged about my neck, and I was cast into the sea, than offend one of those little ones to whom I have preached the Gospel by abjuring it." He was condemned to the fire, and one of the prelates said, "We devote thy soul to the devil." "And I," said Huss, "do commend my soul to Thy hands, O Lord Jesus, for Thou hast redeemed me." Two years afterwards Jerome of Prague suffered and triumphed on the same spot; but Bohemia through the teaching of these two men had been emancipated from the thraldom of Rome, and a few years afterwards the great majority of the nation embraced the faith for which these noble martyrs died. A day of retribution came when the Government threw off its vassalage, and arraying its armies in the field under the leadership of the famous John Ziska and the no less famed Procopius, repulsed, again and again, with tremendous slaughter, the numerous and well appointed armies Rome brought into the field to exterminate alike the truth and the nation.

Procopius was a theologian as well as a warrior. "Can you show," said he to the priests, "that the order of friars was instituted by either the prophets of the Old Testament, or the apostles of the New? If not, by whom were they in-

stituted?" To this the priests did not reply. Their argument was *force*. But better by far, would it have been, had the Bohemians, instead of resorting to the sword, endeavoured to spread the knowledge of the truth so fully taught by Huss and Jerome. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds."

CHAP. IV.

SCOTLAND'S CONFESSORS AND MARTYRS.

In a previous chapter we have seen how Columba had visited Scotland in the sixth century and founded a settlement in Iona, from which the light of truth for some time shone out amidst the surrounding darkness. However, as Columba's successors began to lose the clear views of truth which he had taught, the light grew dim, and soon Romish superstition took the place of the Gospel of Christ.

The heathen Norsemen too, often harassed the settlement. In 795 they plundered and burned it; in 875 it was again attacked and sixty-eight persons murdered. King David I., in the twelfth century, in his zeal for the "Church," finally drove out the settlers and planted a colony of French monks instead; and now truly was

Scotland at the feet of Rome. But no country owned the sway of the Pope for a shorter period. Its brave and warlike inhabitants, who had so often hurled back the Southern chivalry, could ill brook the domination of a foreign priest, and the country, as a whole, could never be said to be very devoted to Rome. Even in the time of King Robert the Bruce we find Pope John XXII. complaining that "the land had never been thoroughly purged from heresy." These "heretics" were, no doubt, some who had remained faithful to the teaching of the early evangelists, and amidst all the corruptions of that profligate age were endeavouring to keep themselves unspotted from the world. By and by Wycliffe's Testament found its way northwards, and we read of one, Murdoch of Hardhill, who had a copy which he kept concealed in a vault, and read to his family at midnight. Another, named Gordon, also had a copy, and used to read portions to a little company gathered in a lonely wood near his house. How dark and unhappy these times must have been! The people were in utter ignorance of the Word of God. Only a manuscript copy of the Testament was to be found here and there, and those who possessed them had to hide them with the greatest secrecy, as it meant death to be found reading the Scriptures in the common tongue.

And Scotland, too, had its confessors and martyrs for Jesus Christ. In 1406 James Riscby, who had learned the truth from John Wycliffe, was committed to

the flames at Perth. In 1420 we find Scotland possessed a *Heretical Inquisitor* in the person of the Abbot of Scone. In 1431 Paul Crawer was burned at St. Andrews. His tormentors forced a ball of brass into his mouth to prevent him addressing the people gathered round the stake. But all the efforts of the Prince of Darkness could not keep out the light which by the grace of God was rising over the nations.

Nearly a hundred years pass away, and we stand by the stake of one of Scotland's greatest sons—Patrick Hamilton, who was burned in 1528.

Born of a noble family in 1504, Hamilton received his education at St. Andrews, and afterwards proceeded to the Continent. Seeking after light, the learned disputations of the Doctors of the Sorbonne did not satisfy him, and he went on to the College of Marburg, which had been newly founded by the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. Here he met Francis Lambert, the friend of Zwingle, who said of him, "I have scarcely ever met a man who expressed himself with so much spirituality and truth on the word of the Lord." Soon his one object was to return to his native land and preach the gospel of full and free salvation. But Scotland had never been more under the power of the priests than at the present moment. The rash King James IV., with all his principal nobility, had fallen on the dark and bloody field of Flodden, and the profligate Bishop Beaton grasped the power of the Government during the

feeble minority of James V. Nevertheless, Hamilton, who had fully counted the cost, returned home to his family near Linlithgow. He was first used in being the means of the conversion of several in his own home. He also visited in the houses of the gentry, where he was known and respected, and sought to win souls for Christ. He preached in the fields, and in the highways and by-ways spoke to individuals, ever seeking to sow the good seed of the Word of God.

Beaton grew alarmed. If this continued, the priests were undone; but Hamilton was of the blood royal, and the Archbishop had to act with caution. His first object was to get the young king out of the way for the time. This he accomplished by inducing him to go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Duthac, in Ross-shire, there to pray for his soul's health. Afterwards, cloaking his dark designs under a plea of Church reformation, he invited Hamilton to visit him at St. Andrews. Here, after a few weeks of freedom, he was arrested in his lodgings at the dead of night, and conveyed through the silent streets to the dungeons of the Bishop's Castle. A few days afterwards he appeared before Beaton, who was attended by a numerous body of the principal bishops and abbots of Scotland. Prior Campbell, having read the indictment, burst out into a torrent of invective. "Heretic," said he, "thou sayest it is lawful for all men to read the New Testament." "Heretic, thou sayest it is lost labour to call on the Virgin

Mary as a mediator." "Heretic, thou sayest it is vain to say masses for the release of souls from purgatory;" and much more in the same strain. Beaton pronounced sentence of death, and every voice on the tribunal said, "Away with him to the fire." At noon he was chained to the stake, the faggots heaped round, and a bag of gunpowder placed at his feet. The powder exploded, wounding the martyr in the face, but the wood was green and would not burn. Another supply was got with like result; his limbs were scorched, but the fire did not reach his body. *Six hours* has the martyr stood on that pile of suffering, but now the end has come, the glory is near. One standing by said, "If thou still holdest true to thy doctrine, give us a sign." The iron band round his waist was red hot, his whole body was burning in the fire, but raising his hand he held it in the flame till the fingers dropped into the fire. His last words were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and so he entered into the joy of his Lord. Surely great grace was given to him in his great need, for it is said that no impatient word escaped his lips, as through such protracted sufferings he patiently waited for the end.

But the death of Patrick Hamilton did more for the cause of truth than his life could have done, as one said, "The reik (smoke) of Hamilton infected every one it blew upon." Numbers came forward to fill the ranks of those who had fallen. The priests were furious, but despite

their utmost vigilance there was now that to contend with which defied all their efforts. Copies of Tyndale's New Testament, printed at Worms in 1526, were being brought into Scotland, concealed in packages of goods and even bags of flour, till they could be distributed over the country. A mandate was issued that "The Scriptures, *or any book that contained a quotation from them*, were not to be read by the people," yet the people bought them and read them, and believed unto everlasting life.

The priests resorted to their favourite plan of burning all whom they could lay hands on. Straiton and Gourlay were burned at Greenside, Edinburgh. Russel and Kennedy were burned at Glasgow. Forrest, with four other confessors, were burned on the Castle Hill. Of Forrest, we read that he was in the habit of beginning at six o'clock in the morning to read the Scriptures, and that he committed to memory three chapters every day, which he repeated to his servant at night.

But the murder of individuals was too slow a process for the cruel and vindictive David Beaton, who was now at the head of the Roman hierarchy. He meditated a Scotch *Bartholomew*, and compiled a list of over a hundred Protestants to be assassinated at one time. This list contained the names of Lord Hamilton, the first peer in Scotland, and many of the nobility who had been led to see the errors of Rome. But James V. dying of grief after the battle of Solway

Moss, this list was found on his person, and the nobles, aghast at the diabolical plot thus revealed, elected the man the priest intended to slay, as Regent of the kingdom during the minority of the infant Queen, Mary Stuart. Thus God, who maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him, overruled the evil designs of the priests for the good of His people, and though the Cardinal forged a will appointing himself Regent, yet the nation knew the profligate priest too well either to believe him or entrust him with a power he would have wielded for his own selfish ends.

Next year, 1543 by Act of Parliament, it became lawful for every subject in the realm to read the Bible in his mother tongue, and then might be seen "the Bible lying upon every gentleman's table, the New Testament openly borne about in men's hands, and thereby did the knowledge of God wondrously increase."

The same year George Wishart returned from the Continent, and now God had given to Scotland an open Bible and a faithful preacher.

Wishart was born in 1512. For some years he was connected with an academy in Montrose, and is said to have been the first who taught Greek in Scotland. While here he became suspected of heresy, and not yet fully established in the truth he retired to the Continent to escape the coming storm.

In Switzerland he met Bullinger and others of the Swiss Evangelists, and be-

The Martyrdom of George Wishart.

came strongly imbued with the earnest evangelistic spirit which marked these pious men.

Returning to Scotland, as we have said, at the close of 1543, he found that the Regent Arran's zeal for the truth had been short lived. Self-interest and worldly policy had led him for a time to favour those who were contending for the faith, but his heart was in the world, and he shaped his conduct accordingly. Let us look for a moment into the Franciscan Convent at Stirling, and there humbly kneeling before a shaven priest we shall see the man who swayed the sovereign power of Scotland. He is solemnly recanting his opinions, and receiving "absolution" for departing from the "true Church." And now the weak tool is ready for the work of the scheming prelate. A marriage had been proposed between the young queen Mary and the heir of Henry VIII., but the priests saw an end to their power if an alliance was formed with protestant England, and the crafty and strong-willed Beaton having got the Regent into his power, the treaty with England was abandoned, and one with popish France put in its stead. Bluff King Henry was indignant at the breach of faith, and one day an English fleet sailed up the Forth and cast anchor in Leith Roads. There was no one to oppose them, and Hereford's soldiers disembarked next morning, pillaged Leith, and fired Edinburgh, which they left burning for three days, returning to their own country after

putting to death every man, woman, and child they met with.

We can easily understand something of the opposition that George Wishart was likely to meet with at a time when the priests held so much political power, as he began, in spite of their edict forbidding "discussion on the doctrines of Scriptures," to expound the Epistle to the Romans to the large audiences who everywhere hung upon his words. He was the greatest orator Scotland had listened to for centuries. In Dundee crowds were drawn together wherever he preached. With convincing eloquence he showed that "all had sinned and come short of the glory of God." Then he spoke of the "one man" by whom sin entered, and passed on to the "One Man" by whom came the "free gift," showing that justification was not to be obtained by works or penance, but "being justified *by faith* we have peace with God."

This good work was suddenly interrupted by the Regent and the Cardinal, who, with a train of siege artillery, sought to capture both the town and the preacher; but the citizens retiring took their preacher with them till the danger was over, when they quietly returned, and the meetings went on for some months as before. But Beaton was on the alert and got a summons delivered to him in the Queen's name, "to depart and trouble the town no more with his presence."

Wishart deemed it wise to obey, and, persecuted in one city, he went to another. Every Church door was now closed to

the faithful evangelist, but like his Master of old, on the hillsides and in the fields he preached the word of life to the listening thousands who surrounded him.

It was a time of real revival wrought by the Holy Spirit of God. Profligate sinners were seen with tears of repentance rolling down their faces, and change of life gave evidence to the reality of their conversion. Men were led to see, not only the errors of Rome—*that* could be understood by mere intellect—but their own state as sinners before a Holy God, and their need of a Divine Substitute in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This could only be wrought by the Spirit who alone can convince of sin and produce true repentance by taking the eye, away from self, to rest on Christ "Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The plague broke out in Dundee a short time after Wishart left, and he hastened back to minister to the sick and the dying. "They need comfort," said he, "and perchance the hand of God will make them magnify and reverence that Word which before, for fear of men, they set at light part." By his advice and help, food and medicine were distributed among the sick. Mounted on the top of the battlements at the "East port" he preached from the text, "He sent His Word and healed them"—a fitting text for such an audience. Outside were the plague-stricken from the Lazar houses

that stood near the gate. Inside were the terrified citizens haunted by the fear that they too might be the next victims.

The Cardinal took care to keep away from Dundee while the plague was raging, but hearing Wishart had returned he hired a priest to assassinate him. The would-be murderer waited at the foot of the stairs with a naked dagger concealed under his cloak till the preacher should descend. Something in the man's manner betrayed him, and Wishart going up to him said, "Friend, what would you?" at the same time taking hold of his right arm and revealing the concealed knife. The crowd rushed in and would have torn him to pieces, but Wishart shielded him from their fury and allowed him to escape.

Among the sick he was unsparing in his labours for the benefit both of soul and body. He carried food to those who were still able to partake of it, and ministered the comfort of the Gospel to those who were dying. He sometimes referred to an incident that happened to him when abroad which stirred him up to more devoted charity. Meeting a Jew one day while sailing on the Rhine, he laboured to convince him that Jesus was the Messiah. "I can never believe," said the Jew, "that you Christians are the followers of the Messiah, because ye abrogate the holy law which was given to our fathers. Ye see the poor perishing among you, yet ye are not moved to pity. Secondly, it is forbidden by the law of God to make any imagery of things in Heaven or things on earth, yet your

chambers are full of idols. A piece of bread baken upon the ashes ye adore and worship, and say it is your God."

Wishart never forgot these true censures which became a lesson, not only to himself but to others.

Leaving Dundee at the close of 1545 Wishart passed on to Edinburgh, preaching in the different towns and villages till he came to East Lothian. He had already experienced the Cardinal's hatred, and he had a presentiment that his work was almost accomplished—that his end was near. A few weeks before he was arrested, he preached at Inveresk. Gentle, winning, and persuasive as his usual manner was, yet he could be stern and unsparing when he came to attack the vices of Rome, and in this address he gave a scathing and vehement denunciation of the practices of the false and idolatrous church. At the same time he told the people of "the shortness of the time he had to travail among them, and of his death which now approached nearer than any one there would believe."

The last time he preached was at Haddington, and before he left the town he took an affectionate farewell of all his friends. The man they loved was going from them, and their hearts were sad because he had told them that they should see his face no more. John Knox, whom we shall meet again, earnestly desired to accompany him, but he, fully persuaded that martyrdom awaited him, would not consent, saying, "Go back to your duties; one is enough for a sacrifice."

Accompanied by a few friends he set out on foot for the house of John Cockburn of Ormiston. When supper was over he gave a short address, seeking to encourage the few friends still around him, and closed by singing the 51st Psalm in old Scotch metre—

> Have mercy on me now, good Lord,
> After Thy great mercy—

and dismissing the company with the parting words, "Now, may God grant quiet rest," he went off to bed. But there was to be no more rest on earth for this devoted servant. The few days left are to be spent in captivity and suffering; the martyr crown is to be won, and then, "faithful unto death," he shall receive the "crown of life." A band of men from the Cardinal, led by Earl Bothwell, had been searching for him; at midnight they surrounded the house and took the evangelist prisoner. He was instantly carried off to St. Andrews and thrown into prison. Wishart was well assured of the fate which lay before him, but he "knew Whom he believed," and his mind was in perfect peace.

On February 28th he was brought out to a mock trial before the Cardinal, and condemned to the flames, to be burned to death on the following day.

Early next morning the preparations began. The stake was erected before the Bishop's palace. Chains, fire, and faggots were prepared for the martyr. Cushions and drapery lined the palace windows, that Beaton and his friends

might luxuriously repose thereon while they feasted their eyes on the sufferer's dying agonies. The guns of the castle were loaded and turned on the scaffold to prevent any chance of rescue. Wishart's friends received permission to see him for the last time. They found him in the dungeon, full of triumphant grace. "Consider and behold my visage," said he, "ye shall not see me change my colour. The grim fire I fear not, for I know surely that I shall sup with my Saviour this night."

At noon he was led forth surrounded by soldiers. His hands had been tied behind his back like a common criminal; a chain was round his waist and a rope round his neck. At the stake he fell upon his knees, and said, "Oh, thou Saviour of the world, have mercy upon me; Father in Heaven, I commend my spirit into Thy hands." Then he prayed for his accusers and enemies, also for his brethren in the faith, when, the fire being lighted, he was quickly surrounded by the flames and his body burned to ashes.

The murder of Wishart was not sanctioned by the Estates. Many of the nobles cared little for the cause of Christ, but a great deal for worldly power, and they could ill abide the proud priest usurping the highest prerogative in the state without their consent. A conspiracy was formed against him; three short months pass, and sixteen daring men succeed in surprising him in his strong castle, on which he had

spent vast sums, and which he believed to be impregnable. Roused by the noise, the wretched man is met on the stairs, and James Melville exhorts him to repent of his wicked life, as he "passes his short sword once and again through his bosom."

A few short years and the magnificent buildings on which the murdered prelate had spent so much labour, that he might be safe to plot and carry out his wicked deeds, but in which he met his just doom, are swept away, and all that remains are a few heaps of ruins. Truly, even "the *dwelling place* of the wicked shall come to nought."

The priests filled up the vacant see by the nomination of Hamilton, brother to the Regent, and immediately proceeded to besiege the castle in which many of the Reformed party had taken refuge. After holding out for sixteen months it was taken by the assistance of a French fleet; and among the prisoners shipped off to the galleys was John Knox, destined to be the leader in the final emancipation of Scotland from the yoke of Rome. Once again it seemed as if the priests had triumphed, and they prepared as usual to celebrate their victory in fresh persecution of the humble followers of Jesus. Walter Mill, an old man of eighty-two years, was arrested and brought before Hamilton. At his trial he had to be assisted into court, but his faith was strong and his voice gave no uncertain sound. "I will not recant," said he, "for I am corn, and not chaff,

and will not be blown away with the wind." He was condemned. A rope was wanted to bind the old man to the stake, but not a merchant in St. Andrews would sell one for the purpose, so greatly was the action of the Archbishop detested. As he stood by the stake he said, "I trust I shall be the last to suffer death in Scotland for this cause," and his words have proved true. He died on the 28th August 1558. During the night the people raised a great heap of stones on the ashes of the martyr, and, though the priests removed them day after day, yet this "heap of witness" duly rose again in the morning.

JOHN KNOX'S HOUSE.

CHAP. V.

JOHN KNOX AND HIS TIMES.

THE faithful preaching and martyr death of George Wishart had not been in vain. The Gospel of the grace of God, so zealously proclaimed by that devoted evangelist, had produced a real and lasting revival among the common people, which was to have deep and far-reaching results. This had its effect in opening the way for more wide-spread instruction in divine truth; and those who were desirous of being thus taught, had soon the privilege of such teaching, for God, who of old sent Peter to Cornelius, was preparing the man He was about to use to further the cause of Christ in Scotland, at a time when wickedness seemed to come in like a flood. That man was John Knox. He had taken refuge, as we have seen, in the castle of St. Andrews,

to be safe from the plots of Archbishop Hamilton, who had put a price upon his head, and when the castle fell before the combined efforts of the Regent's army and the French fleet, Knox, in direct violation of the terms of capitulation, had been shipped off to the galleys.

We can have little idea of all the suffering and misery entailed upon the wretched men who were sent to this worse than penal servitude, but the following description by a writer on the subject will enable us to realise something of what Knox endured during the space of nearly two years before he was released. "The galleys were long craft, rowed by forty or fifty oars a-piece. Able-bodied vagrants, convicts, and the worst off-scourings of France were swept into these floating prisons. The long, low undecked waist of the ship was packed full of rowers, five or six of them chained to each oar. The labour of rowing was terrible. From the great length of the oars, the rowers had to rise to their feet at every stroke. They wrought stripped to the loins, and along the centre of the galley ran a gangway, on which the 'forcers' walked up and down with a long whip in hand which they mercilessly applied to the naked backs of the rowers, whenever they thought that any oar did not keep touch with the rest. In the hold there was a low dark room, entered by a scuttle about two feet square. This was the hospital; it was so low that the deck above was only *three feet* from the sick

men's faces as they lay on the bare boards. The stench was so horrible in this dismal hole that slaves stricken with disease often chose to keep at their oar till they dropped and died rather than enter it."

Such was the place, and such were the masters under whom Knox acquired part of his education, but in the midst of it all we see his unflinching faith and trust in God, calmly waiting for the time when He would deliver him and send him forth into His service. Here he learned meekness in the endurance of wrong, self-control, patience, and also that resolute resistance to everything evil which comes out time after time in his after-life. He would tolerate no shams, neither in men nor things; what he insisted on was *reality*. One day a gorgeously painted lady, a figure of the Virgin Mary, was brought aboard to be kissed, but when presented to Knox, he gently said, "Trouble me not, such an idol is accursed, and I will not touch it." "Thou shalt handle it," said the officer, and violently thrust it into his face. Knox, seeing no other alternative, promptly used the opportunity and cast it into the sea, saying, "Let our lady save herself; she is light enough; let her swim."

The galley in which Knox was confined returned to Scotland in 1548 accompanied by the French fleet sent to repair the damages wrought by Protector Somerset at the Battle of Pinkie. Anchored off the Fife coast, a fellow-prisoner pointed out to him the steeple of St. Andrews,

and asked him if he knew the place. Knox was worn down by fever and thought to be dying, but raising himself, he said, "Yea, I know it well, for I see the place where God first opened my mouth for His glory, and I am fully persuaded that I shall not depart this life till my tongue shall again glorify His holy name in the same place."

Knox was liberated in 1549, and went to England. Here he and others were employed by Cranmer, then in power, to go into the various districts where the Romish clergy were most opposed to the Reformation and preach the Gospel. Knox was appointed to Berwick. This work he entered into with much zeal and fervour, with a deep sense of the love of Christ to lost sinners, and of the grace of God in providing salvation without money and without price. He was not content with the district allotted to him, but travelled round the surrounding country as far as Newcastle, "in season and out of season preaching the Word."

In December 1553 we find him in London. King Edward had died in July. Lady Jane Grey, after a reign of ten days, had passed from the throne to the prison; from the prison to the block, and Mary Tudor is queen. Night is settling down upon England to be lighted only by lurid gleams from the stakes of the confessors and martyrs of Jesus Christ. Protestants were allowed till the 20th of December to "change their opinions," after that it was to be "turn

or burn." Knox knowing that the time was short, preached on. "I have no time to answer your letter," he wrote to a friend, "for I must preach every day as long as this poor, weak body will allow." At last at the urgent entreaties of his friends he returned from London and arrived at Dieppe in January 1554. The same year Mary of Guise was appointed Regent of Scotland; at heart a bigoted papist, yet she had won the affections of the protestant party by befriending them from the severity of Arran after his apostacy, and it was by this means she had succeeded in procuring his resignation.

Now that she was in power, she courted their influence by promising to support them against the clergy. Thus the policy of the Regent gave liberty to Christians to meet in private for the preaching of the Word and exhortation, though at heart she cared for none of these things. The bitter persecution in England under Queen Mary led many to flee into Scotland where they became a help to their brethren by their zeal for the truth and their desire to further the Gospel among the common people. But the favour of the Queen Regent had a very different effect on the Lords of the Congregation (as the nobles who favoured the Reformation came to be called); they sought to please her by going to mass, and attending the outward services of the papists. This conduct brought out a strongly-worded warning from Knox. "Arme yourselves," said he, "to stand with

Christ in this shorte batell: for avoyding ydolatrie your substance salbe spoillit: but for obeying ydolatrie heavenlie ryches shalbe lost: for avoyding of ydolatrie ye may fall into the handis of earthly tirantis, but obeyeris, manteaneris, and consentaris to ydolatrie sall not eschaip the handis of the liveing God. Hes not the maist part of the sanctis of God from the beginning entered into rest be torment and troubillis. Did God comforte theme and sall He despyse us, gif in fichting aganis iniquitie we follow thair footstepis? He will not."

But when the Regent found her power firmly established, she threw off the mask and gave them a rude awakening by summoning four of the protestant preachers to appear at Stirling and answer to a charge of heresy and rebellion.

The nobles remonstrated, and reminded Mary of her promises. She replied, like a true Jesuit, that "princes are not to be expected to keep their promises unless it suits their own convenience," and that she would "drive every preacher from Scotland, though they preached as soundly as St. Paul." Nevertheless, at this time she yielded, departed from the diet, and forbade the preachers to appear; but when the day arrived she ordered the summons to be called, and the prescribed to be outlawed for not appearing.

At this time Knox returned from the continent and arrived in Scotland in 1555. He was invited to Ayrshire, and

preached every day wherever he found an open door. But the Roman clergy hearing of his arrival, cited him to appear before them in the Blackfriar's Church at Edinburgh. Knox feared God too much to fear man, and set out to be present at the diet; but the priests were afraid to bring the matter to an issue.

Knox arrived, but found that his enemies had departed, and, finding no accusers, he quietly went up into the pulpit and preached the gospel to the multitude who were gathered together to see how the matter would end. For the following ten days in succession, he preached to large audiences from the same place. Next year we find him back in Geneva. In 1559 he finally returned to Scotland. The clergy immediately proclaimed him an outlaw and a rebel, and put a price upon his head, but the nobles protected him from their violence, and arranged a meeting at St. Andrews. Knox preached in the villages along the Fife coast by the way, and arrived in St. Andrews on the 9th of June. The Archbishop, hearing of the gathering of the nobles, dashed after them with two hundred horse; but, finding them stronger than he expected, fled again for his life, leaving a message for Knox "that if he dared to preach from his pulpit, a dozen bullets should light upon his nose." The nobles were intimidated, but Knox said, "As for the fear of danger that may come to me, let no man be anxious, for my life is in the hands of Him whose glory I seek. I

desire the hand or weapon of no man to defend me; I only crave audience." Next Sunday he preached without interruption, and continued to do so for some days longer. In July we find him in Edinburgh, and, when the army of the nobles had to retire to Stirling before the combined forces of the Queen Regent and the French auxiliaries, we find him with them, telling them in blunt, plain language that they had failed because they had forsaken the Lord and put their confidence in man. "When we were few in number we called upon God, but since our strength has increased there has been nothing heard but 'This lord will bring us so many hundred spears,' and 'If this earl be on our side, no man in that district will trouble.' Let us unfeignedly return unto the Lord, for it is the Eternal Truth of the Eternal God for which we contend, and it shall finally prevail, though it be resisted for a season." Next year help arrived from England. The French troops in Leith were forced to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was signed in Edinburgh whereby the foreign soldiers were withdrawn, and the Queen Regent, wearied out and heart-sick of the struggle, died in Edinburgh Castle on the 10th of June. Feeling the end to be near, she sent for Lord James Stuart and told him she was sorry for Scotland and for her own share in Scotland's sufferings, and asked forgiveness of all whom she had wronged. Lord James advised her to see the preacher Willocks. She did so, and listened to

him with much attention, but afterwards sent for a popish priest and died a "good Catholic." Her bigotry was supreme,—a determined opposer of Christ; an oppressor and persecutor of His people, and a hater of His Word. She became the patron of a party whose members were unscrupulously wicked, whose actions were relentlessly cruel, whose system of fraud and falsehood were a disgrace to intelligent humanity. She lived to see her power broken, her hopes blasted, and her schemes defeated, and died in darkness and despair. Verily "the way of the wicked He turneth upside down."

The man of God is called upon to stand for the truth, not only in the face of open opposition and persecution, but more so when Satan appears as an angel of light, when evil is called good, and when the love of many is waxing cold. Then, indeed, is the faithful servant called upon to show that he is not ignorant of the doings of the enemy of souls, that, living by faith, he is ready to fight the good fight of faith, and witness a good confession for Christ Jesus. Under the regency of Mary of Guise, Knox had been persecuted, banished, outlawed, a price set upon his head, and assassins hired to slay him. Under the government of Mary Stuart, he had the grief of seeing many who walked uprightly in time of persecution turning aside in time of peace, to make servile courtiers, for worldly advancement, to a vain and dissembling woman. He, himself, by turns was threatened and fawned upon, publicly

accused and privately slandered, but nevertheless the great Reformer went steadfastly on, doing the work put into his hands, and ever seeking to advance the cause of Christ in Scotland.

Mary Stuart arrived in Scotland on the 19th of August 1561. She had been brought up in France—the most polluted court in Europe: a place where every vice was cultivated, where every virtue was ridiculed, and for the brief period of eighteen months she had been partner of the throne. Her uncles, the Duke of Guise and Cardinal of Lorraine, had engaged her to devote herself heart and hand to the extirpation of the "new opinions" with fire and sword, if need be; and with this purpose she came to Scotland. She refused to condescend to examine the subject of difference between papist and protestant. She scorned to hear the preachers, and so wilfully did she shut her eyes to the truth that she would not even allow them to lay before her in writing the ground of their faith. But the protestant party was now in power, and she had to conceal her real designs until a time came more favourable for their execution.

Nevertheless, the people were captivated by the charms of their young queen, and the first night she slept in Holyrood she was awakened by a serenade under her windows—not very successful as music, and all the more distasteful to Mary because the people were singing psalms. Next Sunday she ordered mass to be said in her chapel,

upon which Knox said "he was more afraid of one mass than of ten thousand armed enemies." There was just cause for fear. In the Netherlands, multitudes had been put to death under Charles V. and his more wicked son Philip II. In France, the followers of Jesus were being persecuted by the Guises. In Spain, the martyr piles still continued to blaze, and in the sister kingdom of England they had newly gone out with the death of Mary Tudor. Knowing the knowledge of the truth to be the only safeguard from error, Knox continued to preach with increased energy twice every Sunday and three times during the week in the great building of St. Giles, which was crowded by interested listeners. From some of his writings which have come down to us, we learn that in his preaching he gave forth no uncertain sound. Heaven and Hell, salvation and judgment, justification by faith or condemnation through unbelief, were to him solemn realities. Death by sin, and life by Christ alone, were the cardinal points of his doctrine. No mere set of opinions, whether protestant or otherwise, were sufficient. There must be regeneration through the work of the Spirit, producing new life in the soul, and from this new life Knox looked for new *conduct*—the "fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." Knox had settled in Edinburgh in 1560, and the house he inhabited may still be seen in the High Street. Over the west front is the inscription, "Lufe

God above al and your nichbour as yourself." A stair leads up from the street to the audience hall, in which is a window, called the "preaching window," because from it Knox was in the habit of addressing the people assembled in the street below. Underneath this window are the words, "DEUS ΘΕΟΣ GOD."

Mary having set her mind upon subduing Knox and bending him to her will, summoned him to the palace. In one of their many interviews, after a long conference, she charged him with teaching the people a different religion from that allowed by their princes. He replied that true religion derived its origin from the eternal God, and that if subjects were bound to frame their religion according to the will of their rulers, the Hebrews would have been of the same religion as Pharaoh.

The papists feared that Knox's appeals would shake the Queen's constancy; the protestants hoped she would be won over, to attend the preaching at least, but Knox thought differently. He says, "Her whole proceedings declare that the Cardinal's lessons are so deeply printed in her heart that the substance and the quality are like to perish together."

The news of the massacre of Vassy, which took place in France at this time, brought much joy to the papists. One Sunday morning the Duke of Guise had surrounded their meeting house, where about 1200 Huguenots—as the French Christians were called—were gathered together, and the troops bursting open

the doors, with cries of "Kill, kill," the work of butchery began. When it was over the soldiers gathered together the Bibles and hymn books and burned them. About eighty persons—men, women, and children—were slain, and several hundreds wounded. When tidings of this exploit of her uncle reached Scotland, Mary gave a grand ball in the palace, and this unseemly mirth called forth the stern rebuke of Knox, who said that "princes were more exercised in dancing and music than in hearing or reading the Word of God; and that they delighted more in fiddlers and flatterers than in the company of wise men, capable of giving them wholesome counsel." As to dancing, he said it was "a gesture more becoming to mad, than to sober men, and that those who danced for joy at the misfortunes of God's people would soon have their mirth converted into mourning." Next day he was summoned to the palace, ushered into the royal chamber where the Queen sat with her ladies and counsellors, and accused of having spoken irreverently of Her Majesty. Knox bluntly told her that if she refused to hear the preacher herself, she must depend on the false reports of flatterers, but that for her benefit he would repeat the substance of what he had said. Thereupon she was compelled for once to listen to a sermon, though much against her will. Mary could find nothing faulty in his discourse, and was reluctantly compelled to let the bold preacher go free.

We next find Knox in the West, visit-

ing with untiring energy the different Churches, and seeking to confirm the Christians in the faith of Christ.

In 1566 France and Spain concluded a peace with the object of "rooting out the new heresy." Just as Herod and Pilate were made friends together over the condemnation of the Lord Jesus, so Catharine de Medici—one of the most wicked women that ever lived—patched up a peace with the cruel, vindictive, and bigoted Philip of Spain, who was responsible for the unjust murder of nearly 100,000 of his subjects—the followers of Christ—in the Netherlands. The object of this agreement was that they might use their joint powers against the protestants, and exterminate every man, woman, and child who refused to worship the Roman idol. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, six years afterwards, was the outcome of this atrocious compact, when a beginning was made in Paris with the slaughter of Admiral Coligny and the principal leaders, who had been decoyed to the city by fair words and false promises of security, made, only to be broken. The work of death proceeded through the provinces till over 50,000 of the best citizens of France had been destroyed; their only crime being that they dared to differ from the teaching of Rome and sought to worship God in sincerity and truth.

Influenced by her uncles, the Guises, Mary readily became a partner to the scheme. The intentions of the papists were to reduce Scotland to obedience to

the pope; next, to depose Elizabeth and seat Mary on the throne of England instead. The dagger of the assassin and the art of the poisoner were considered legitimate weapons, and the pope promised "pardon for all his sins" to the man who should succeed in assassinating Elizabeth. But all those deep-laid plots came to nought, and the misguided Scottish Queen, in place of sitting upon an English throne, laid her head upon an English block, and her better qualities were lost sight of in the vices which she allowed to govern her life and conduct.

Meanwhile, she temporised. Smiles, caresses, and hypocritical promises were the weapons she used, until the majority of the nobles should be won over. With these weapons Mary was an adept. She made a show of favouring the Reformed party till the plot was ripe for the stake and the faggot, and her arts were largely successful. Many zealous professors grew cold to the cause of Christ in proportion as they courted Mary's favour, and the more they reverted from Christ, the more they grew in the queen's good graces. But there was one man who would neither be won by flattery nor silenced by threats. That man was Knox, and Mary having already measured herself against him, and found that neither her tears nor her frowns had the slightest effect upon his massive sense of righteousness, and that, to win her smile or escape her anger, he would not deviate one hair-breadth from the straight line of what he considered duty, she determined to bring him to

the block. Events which took place shortly afterwards placed her enemy in her power. In 1563 she had taken a journey to Stirling, and while the queen was away, mass was openly celebrated at Holyrood, and some of the turbulent spirits among the protestants, offended at these proceedings, burst into the chapel and asked the priest how he dared to be so *malapert* in the queen's absence. Mary, when she heard of this, was indignant, and ordered two of the protestants to be brought to trial. Fearing this was only a beginning to measures still more hostile, some of the nobles induced Knox to write to the principal gentlemen interested in the case, to be present at the trial. Knox did so, and one of the circular letters came into the hands of the queen. This she laid before the Privy Council, who, to her great delight, pronounced it treasonable. Knox himself was now brought to trial, and great was the anxiety on the part of the people as to the result. The queen took her place at the head of the counsel with much dignity, but seeing Knox standing uncovered at the foot of the table, she forgot herself and burst into loud and unbecoming laughter. "That man," said she, "has made me weep, and shed never a tear himself; now I will see if I can make him weep." But Knox, however, was made of sterner stuff. The proceedings began, and Knox was asked if he was sorry for what he had done. He replied that before he could be sorry he must first be taught

his offence. "You shall not escape me," said the queen; "is it not treason to accuse a prince of cruelty?" "Is it lawful, madam, for me to answer for myself, or shall I be condemned unheard?" "Say what you can, for I think you will have enough to do," said the queen exultingly. "I desire then," said Knox, "of your grace and of this honourable audience, whether you do not know that the obstinate papists are deadly enemies of all such as profess the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that they most earnestly desire the extermination of them, and of the true doctrine taught in this realm." The queen was silent; her conscience told her that the words of the fearless confessor were true, but the lords answered with one voice, "God forbid that ever the lives of the faithful stood in the power of the papists, for sad experience has taught us what cruelty lies in their hearts." Knox proceeded and told the queen that the papists who had her ear were dangerous counsellors, and such her mother had found them to be before her. "But," said he, "cast up the acts of your parliament; I have offended nothing against them, but I affirm that those who have inflamed your grace against the protestants are the children of the devil, and therefore must obey the desire of their father who was a liar and a manslayer from the beginning." This plainness of speech the queen and counsel were not in the habit of hearing. They liked not this rugged man's rugged way of calling things by

their right names, and the chancellor interrupting, informed him that he was not in the pulpit. "I am in the place where conscience demands me to speak the truth, and therefore the truth I speak; impugn it whoso list," was his reply. After some further discussion he was told he might return home. "I thank God and the queen's majesty," said he, and withdrew. The votes were then taken as to his conduct, and he was pronounced *Not Guilty* by a large majority. Secretary Maitland was enraged, for he had assured the queen of his condemnation, and Mary was mortified and displeased at his acquittal, and "That nicht," says Knox, "was nyther dancing nor fiddeling in the court, for madam was disappointed of her purpose, quhilk was to have Johne Knox to her will by vote of her nobility."

Two years afterwards, the queen was married to Darnley. The Earl of Murray and many of the principal nobility objected to a man who could be "either papist or protestant as it suited him," and Mary, finding that nothing would bring them over to her party, dismissed them from her presence with taunts and reproaches. At the age of twenty-three, on a mid-summer day in 1565, she was married; and from that moment the steps of the misguided queen led rapidly downwards through a series of follies and crimes, each of which brought greater troubles in its train than those it was intended to cure. After six months of married life she found that

"she hated Darnley as much as before she had loved him." He, in turn, became jealous of the Vatican agent, Rizzio, and one Saturday night a dark tragedy took place in Holyrood. Rizzio was slain in the queen's apartments. He who had plotted the death of thousands meets with a bloody death himself.

Henceforth Mary lived only for revenge. Outwardly, she masked her hatred until everything was ready for another tragedy, and then, one Sunday night in February 1567, we find her seated by the bedside of her sick husband, promising that "all should be forgotten and forgiven," and that they should live together—as in the happy days of old. About midnight she left him to "attend a ball in the palace." When she arrived at Holyrood, Bothwell left on his dark mission, and next morning the dead body of the king was found in the garden. Three months afterwards she was married to the murderer of her lawful husband. Another month, and at Carberry Hill the guilty pair met the nation in open rebellion against such high-handed wickedness. Bothwell escaped, but Mary was made prisoner and confined in Lochleven Castle. Truly, "the way of transgressors is hard."

The Earl of Murray, called "the Good Regent," was now elected to govern for the young king, and by his prudence and ability the country was again reduced to quietness. When Mary escaped from captivity, she met the Regent's

forces at Langside, and being once more defeated was forced to flee. This time she took refuge in England, where after a lingering imprisonment of nineteen years she was finally brought to the block.

Mary Stuart had often been warned by the faithful, if stern Knox, of the danger of her course. She lived in a day when the truths of Scripture were faithfully preached by many of her protestant subjects, but she slighted the warnings, scorned the preachers, refused to read the Scriptures for herself, lived only for pleasure, and circumstances alone hindered her from being a bitter persecutor of God's people. The Regent Murray was an earnest, God-fearing man who sought to do that which was true and right in the high position he had been called to fill, and Knox now seeing the popish idolatry, as he thought, rooted out, and Christianity the professed religion of the nation, felt that his work was done. He was now an old man, and his life of incessant labour had told heavily on a constitution never very strong. But the papists soon found means to murder the Regent at Linlithgow, and this awakened Knox from his dreams of ease. The body was brought to Edinburgh, and Knox preached the funeral sermon from the text, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Three thousand persons sat before him dissolved in tears as he described the Regent's virtues and bewailed his loss. Knox's grief at this event brought on a stroke of palsy, and his enemies hoped

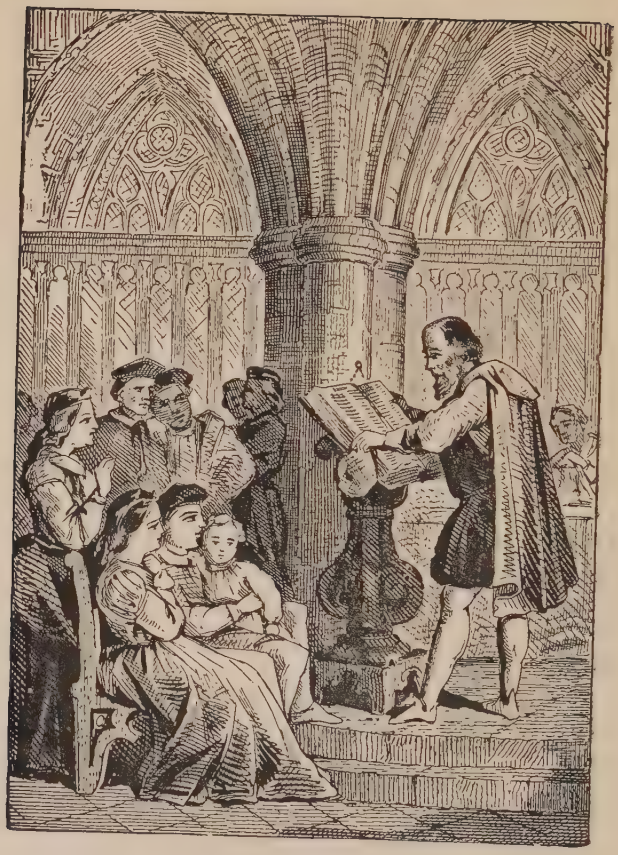
he would preach no more, but he recovered, and during the civil wars which followed between the king's and the queen's party, he continued to preach in St. Giles as often as his strength would permit. Obnoxious to both parties by his fearless denunciation of evil, his life was often in danger, and one evening a musket ball was fired through the window at which he was in the habit of sitting. It happened that he was in a different part of the room at the time, and so escaped the assassin's bullet.

After a short visit to St. Andrews we find him back in Edinburgh in 1572. Here he learned with deep distress of the murder of many of his acquaintances and friends in France during the massacre of Bartholomew. But his grief speedily gave way to indignation, and he caused himself to be conveyed to the pulpit, where he summoned up his strength to thunder forth, like some Hebrew prophet of old, the vengeance of Heaven against "that cruel murderer, the King of France." The French Ambassador, Le Croc, resented Knox's plain speech, and requested the Regent Morton to silence him. But Morton, believing that Knox had spoken only the truth, refused to interfere. Thereupon Le Croc, in much umbrage, took his departure. When tidings of the massacre reached Rome it was received in a different manner. The Pope ordered a day of solemn thanksgiving and *proclaimed a year of jubilee.*

On the 9th of November he preached for the last time, and afterwards, "lean-

ing upon his staff, he crept down the street to his house," from which he never came out again alive. A few days afterwards, feeling the end to be near, he sent for some of his elders and deacons, and the words with which he addressed them give us the keynote to the man's character—the object of his life. "The day now approaches," said he, "when I shall be released from my great labours, and shall be with Christ. And now God is my witness, whom I have served in spirit, in the gospel of His Son, that I have taught nothing but the true and solid doctrine of the gospel of the Son of God."

On Monday, November 24th, he fell asleep. His body was buried in the Old Greyfriar's Churchyard, and the Regent Morton, standing at the head of the open grave, said, "There lies he who never feared the face of man." By the side of Morton's wreath, we place another of modern manufacture. Pope Pius IX. in 1877 bewailing the loss of Scotland, says, "That savage apostate Knox, perverted Scotland by the protestant heresy, and won it over to a sect which repudiates all hierarchy, and admits only simple presbyters all equal among each other." A small plate of metal, with the initials "J. K.," let into the pavement of Parliament Square, now marks the last resting place of John Knox.



READING THE CHAINED BIBLE.

CHAP. VI.

TYNDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT.

WYCLIFFE'S life and teaching, but more especially his translation of the Bible into the English language, had been the means of making the Gospel known to many, but as we have seen in a previous chapter, a Bible written out by hand was a very expensive book. Few people were able to purchase even a portion of it, and fewer still, the whole book. The priests also devoted themselves to seize and destroy every copy they could find, so that in a short time there was a danger of the Bible becoming as unknown to the people as if a translation had never been made.

But Wycliffe's work had not been in vain. Like the sower he had gone forth with the good seed which is the Word of God, and though some had fallen on the

wayside hearts of the adherents of Rome, and some on the thorny ground of intellectual and political life, yet much of it had taken root in the hearts of the common people who "heard him gladly." One hundred years afterwards, when Tyndale's New Testament appeared, we see, in the eagerness with which it was welcomed, a proof of the lasting character of the work of that faithful old contender for the truth—John Wycliffe.

But during that period persecution raged with unabated violence against suspected *Lollards*. Parliament enacted, among other acts already in force, that all "judges, justices, and magistrates shall take oath to make inquisition for *Lollards*, and that they shall issue warrants for their apprehension and delivery to the ecclesiastical judges, that they may be acquit or convict by the laws of holy church." All found with English books, or suspected of "Wycliffe's learning," were apprehended. The priests could pardon any sin but the sin of heresy. That must be purged by fire. Soon the new act brought forth fresh victims to the insatiable cruelty of the false church. Among the many who were counted worthy to suffer for His name, we read of John Claydon who was found in possession of a book called the *Lanthorn of Light*. Light the priests could not tolerate. It exposed their dark deeds. In 1415 they burned both John and his book. William Taylor, a priest, who had learned better knowledge than Rome could teach him, was burned in

1422. Another priest, named William White, was converted, and went about the country preaching the truths he had learned from Wycliffe's writings. He was arrested and tried at Canterbury, but his courage failed when he saw before him the fiery death, and he confessed and abjured his heresy. However, instead of peace, his recantation only brought him remorse and sorrow because of his failure, and we are not surprised, to find the ex-priest in a short time preaching Jesus Christ with more zeal and diligence than before. Arrested and brought before the Bishop of Norwich he was condemned, and this time went joyfully to the fire. Even amidst the flames he exhorted the people, and told them to remain steadfast in the doctrine he had taught them, but as he continued to speak, a servant of the bishops smote him a cruel blow on the mouth, and forced him to remain silent: thus he meekly yielded up his spirit.

By and by the fierce and bloody Wars of the Roses began, and those in high places got other work to do than persecuting Lollards. During a period of the war when the White Rose of York was in the ascendency, a Lancastrian family under the assumed name of Hutchins, came to reside near Berkley Castle, in Gloucestershire. When the Lancastrian party was in power they resumed their original name, and a son born to them in 1484 was named William Tyndale. The accession of Henry VII. to the throne of England in 1485 put an end to the thirty

years of civil war which had wasted the kingdom, and men had time to think of other things than mere brute fighting. Accordingly when young Tyndale grew up he was sent at an early age to the University of Oxford. How men were trained for priests in these days Tyndale himself records. He says, "In the Universities they have ordained that no man shall look at the Scriptures until they be trained in heathen learning eight or nine years, and *armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scriptures.* And when he taketh his first degree he is sworn that he shall hold *none opinions condemned by the Church.*" Tyndale found nothing to satisfy him in all this "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth," but his time was not entirely spent in this vain pursuit. Here he became acquainted with the Greek and Latin New Testament, published by Erasmus, at Basle, in 1516. Erasmus had for some time been professor of Greek at Oxford, and had published a book called the *Praise of Folly*, exposing the evils of the monastic orders; but, timid as he was learned, he had retired to the Continent dismayed at the storm he had raised. Tyndale's acquaintance with the New Testament marked the turning-point in his career. In it he found that which could meet his conscience and satisfy his heart. It was the means of his conversion; through the living Word he was born again. Having learned the truth himself, he

began to lecture in public on the book which had been the means of his own salvation, that others too might know the Saviour of whom it spoke. But Oxford would have none of that, so he retired to Cambridge. Here he met Thomas Bilney, soon to become a fervent preacher of the Gospel and a martyr for Jesus Christ. For years Bilney had been seeking salvation, and as he knew of no other way he regularly went to the priests—but how shall the blind lead the blind? His confessor prescribed fasts, vigils, masses, and indulgences which cost poor Bilney a great deal of money but gave him no rest. His purse got empty and his conscience knew no peace. At last he began to doubt whether it was not for their own interests that the priests denounced the Greek Testament as the "source of all heresy." Romish doctrines were losing their hold on Bilney; he went to the house where the Testaments were secretly sold, bought one, and with fear and trembling shut himself up in his room to read—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Bilney thought over the words he had read, and as he meditated, the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the only way of salvation. "*Jesus* saves. Jesus Christ saves sinners. Jesus saves *me*," exclaimed Bilney. Now he saw that his fasts and vigils were "destroying instead of saving him," and born from above by the power of the Spirit of God, Bilney

had turned from the study of law to study the New Testament and learn of Jesus.

In 1521 we find Tyndale back in Gloucestershire. He had completed his studies, and was now engaged as tutor to the sons of Sir John Walsh, at Sodbury Hall. Perhaps in few other places could he have been brought into more direct contact with the evil practices of Rome, than in this retired spot which was much frequented by priests and friars. For fifty years four Italian bishops placed in succession over the diocese had surrendered it "to the pope, to the monks, and to immorality." A resident collector from Rome had power from the pope to pardon the sins of murder and theft on condition that the criminal *shared half his profits* with the pontifical commissioner. Rome cared not how she got money, provided only she got it. We narrate these details only to show how debased and darkened the minds of men may become when unenlightened by the Word of God; and when the light shines in what fierce opposition is raised in the human heart, because its evil deeds are exposed. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

Sir John Walsh was a man of considerable importance, kept a hospitable table, and the priests and idle monks, ever fond of good cheer, took full advantage of his generosity. The church dignitaries cared little for their duties, but a great deal for their revenues, and they soon saw that if Master Tyndale's "opinions" were received, their illegitimate gains would be gone. The learned doctors and lordly abbots warmly disputed with him as to his presumption in daring to differ from "Holy Church," but Tyndale, with his Greek Testament ever by his side, had a way of testing their arguments by what was written in "The Book," so as to leave him master of the field. "That is the Book that makes heretics," said they. "The source of all heresy is pride," replied Tyndale. Not content with merely exposing that which was false, he busied himself in making known that which was true, and devoted himself to preaching the Gospel in the villages near by. Extending his journeys as he had opportunity, he visited Bristol and preached to large audiences which gathered to hear him on the college green.

His teaching had its effect too on his patron Sir John, and the priests and monks soon began to find that their welcome at the manor house was not so hearty as heretofore. This they ascribed to Tyndale's influence, and having been defeated in the argument they resorted to force. The Chancellor of the diocese cited him to appear and answer to certain charges which had been made

against him. Tyndale went, and knowing what was before him, "prayed heartily to God to strengthen him to stand fast in the truth of His Word." We get a glimpse of the judicial procedure of these days from what he tells us of this court. "When I came before the Chancellor," he says, "he threatened me grievously and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog; and laid to my charge things whereof there could be none accuser brought forth, *as their manner is.*" To this invective Tyndale made a calm reply which only exasperated the Chancellor all the more, but as they could not produce one witness to substantiate their charges, he escaped out of their hands and returned home to Sodbury. The priests next tried to "convert" Tyndale, and engaged a learned schoolman to visit him and convince him of his errors.

We know little of what took place at this interesting interview, except that the evangelist's Testament was more than a match for all the churchman's logic, and when he saw that the Word of God only exposed the evil of his own doctrine, he exclaimed, "We had better be without God's laws than the pope's." Tyndale, shocked at such irreverence, warmly replied, "I defy the pope and all his laws, and if God spares my life I will cause the boy that drives the plough to know more of the Scriptures than all the priests in England." He had decided on his great work, the translation of the Bible into the language of the people,

and devoted all his spare time to this one object. But when the priests got knowledge of his design, their opposition, smouldering before, broke out into so fierce a flame that he was forced to leave Sodbury. "You cannot save me from the priests," he said to Sir John, "and I should be sorry to bring you into trouble; permit me to leave you." Taking with him his papers and his precious Testament, he bade good-bye for ever to the place where two years of his life had been pleasantly and profitably spent, and became an exile and a wanderer, that he might give to England the Bible —the knowledge of the Word of God. Tyndale went to London. He vainly hoped that the learned Bishop Tunstal would accord him patronage and encourage him in his design, but he had yet to learn not to put his faith in princes. Tunstal received him coldly and listened to his plans, but told him that his house was full, and dismissed him. "Alas!" said he, "I have been deceived: there is nothing to be looked for from the bishops: Christ was smitten on the cheek before the bishop: Paul was buffeted before a bishop, and a bishop has turned me away; but I hunger for the Word of God, and I will translate it whether they say so or no: God will not suffer me to perish." Repulsed by the Bishop, he found a home with a Christian merchant named Humphrey Monmouth, who received him into his house and provided him with the opportunity of prosecuting his labours. Here he met John Fryth,

whom he speaks of as "his dear son in the faith," and who, at a future day, was to die a martyr for the truth of Jesus. Meantime he rendered valuable assistance to the translator, and daily the two shut themselves up in a small room in Monmouth's house to render the Greek Testament into English. They were making rapid progress, and Tyndale hoped soon to see his sheets printed, when events took place which showed him that there was "no room, not only in the bishop's palace to translate the New Testament, but that there was no place to do it in all England."

Two years before Tyndale arrived in London, Luther's books were beginning to be introduced into England, and in such numbers too that the clergy took alarm, and condemned every copy they could lay hands upon to be seized and burned. Aleander, the papal nuncio in Germany, had prohibited the printers from publishing any of Luther's works in the Empire. "Very well," said the printers, "we shall send them *to England* then." And to England they came. The *Theses* of 1517, the *Explanation of the Lord's Prayer*, the *Epistle to the Galatians*, the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, and others were translated into English, imported by the enterprising merchants, who found it a profitable, if a risky trade, and circulated through the country by an elaborate system of colporteurage. The clergy did everything in their power to stop the growing evil. Even King Henry himself entered

the lists, and wrote a book against "that arch-heretic and child of the devil, Martin Luther, who had ventured to resist the authority of the Pope." Writing to Louis of Bavaria, he exhorts him to "seize and exterminate this Luther, and unless he repents, to deliver him and his books to the flames." A copy of the King's book, beautifully bound, was sent to Rome, and the Pope, to show his gratitude to the messenger who brought it, gave him *his toe to kiss.* To Henry too something must be given, and a bull was issued bestowing upon him the sounding title of *Defender of the Faith.* Henry was in raptures. A sumptuous entertainment was given. The heralds proclaimed the King's new title, and Wolsey said mass. The Court jester, entering in the midst of these proceedings, asked the cause of his joy. "The Pope has just named me *Defender of the Faith,*" said the King. "Ho! ho! good Harry," replied the fool, "let you and me defend one another, but let the faith alone to defend itself." The "fool" was the wisest man in the company. Henry, to show his zeal, immediately began to persecute all who differed from Rome—to destroy the faith instead of defending it. In Lincolnshire was found a small community of Christians who were wont to meet together on Sundays and at other times, as they had opportunity, to read a portion of the Gospels, or spend the time in prayer and exhortation. Books were few, and those who possessed a copy of the Gospels or one of the

WILLIAM TYNDALE.

Epistles would secretly lend them to their friends that they might commit portions to memory, and in turn pass them on to others. One, John Scrivener, a faithful colporteur, was entrusted with this task, and carefully conveyed the precious volumes to those who thirsted for the life-giving word. Here was a field for Henry. Officers suddenly appeared in the district, and many arrests were made. Some recanted: some were tied to a post in the market-place, while the executioner branded them on the cheek with a red-hot iron. Others were considered worthy of death, and among them the colporteur Scrivener. When the pile was ready his weeping children were dragged forward, the torch forced into their unwilling hands, and they were compelled to light the faggots of their own father's death pile. The priests also made inquisition in London for all who should possess Luther's books and tracts, and Tyndale thereupon fearing that the stake might put an end to his life before his translation was completed, determined to leave London and retire to the Continent.

The generous Monmouth gave him ten pounds, equal to nearly fifty pounds in our day. Other friends of the gospel made up a like sum, and taking his unfinished sheets and his Greek Testament he went on board a vessel and sailed to Hamburg in 1524. He knew what fierce opposition his work would raise, but he was determined that England should have the New Testament in spite

of the Clergy. "The priests," he said, "when they had slain Christ set pole-axes to keep Him in His sepulchre, that He should not rise again: even so have our priests buried the Testament of God, and all their study is to keep it down that it rise not again."

From Hamburg Tyndale proceeded to Wittenberg where he spent some time in the society of Luther and Melancthon. Afterwards he went to Cologne where he hoped to get his translation printed. Taking lodgings in an obscure part of the town to avoid observation, he placed his manuscripts in the hands of the printer, Peter Quental, and soon had the joy of seeing the first sheets of the first printed English New Testament. But his joy was of short duration. Dean Cochloeus found out his secret and procured an order from the Senate forbidding the printer to continue the work, but Tyndale learning of this interruption succeeded in procuring the printed sheets, and hastily leaving Cologne proceeded up the Rhine to Worms. When Cochloeus and the officers arrived at the printing house they found that the "apostate had taken the abominable papers and escaped." The dean took care to apprise Henry VIII. and warn him of the danger England was exposed to. "The New Testament in English is about to be sent to your people," said he. "Give orders at every seaport to prevent the introduction of this most baneful merchandise." Such was the way the priests of Rome spoke about the Word

of God. The Scriptures must not be read by the people. This was the dogma of the false church then, and she is the same to-day. Generations have succeeded each other, yet in each there has been manifested that implacable, untiring opposition to God which was begun by Satan in the Garden of Eden, and in every age since he has found men willing to be his instruments for evil in the world. Civilisation and so-called progress have not in the least modified the policy of Rome to the Word of God. Writing to his bishops and clergy in 1824, some time after the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Pope Leo XII. says, "Ye are not ignorant that a society commonly called a Bible Society, is audaciously spreading through the earth: and that . . . it endeavours with all its might, and by every means, to translate, or rather corrupt the Holy Scriptures into the vulgar tongues of all nations. . . . We exhort you to remove your flocks with care and earnestness from this *fatal pasture*."

In 1870 Pope Pius IX., after the loss of his temporal power, was forced to be the unwilling witness of the "audacious" Bible Society, upon which his predecessor had poured his unqualified condemnation; but his power was now limited, and he could only express his hatred to the Word of God by warning all "good catholics" to beware of the "pernicious literature" issued therefrom.

In 1890 a Christian lady in Edinburgh offered to give a Bible to an Italian who

lay in the Calton Jail, charged with murder, but the Roman Catholic Canon who visited the jail *would not allow him to accept it.* Many more particular instances might be cited, but these three are enough to prove our point. The opposition to the truth in the nineteenth century is not one whit less than it was in the sixteenth.

After a voyage of four or five days, Tyndale arrived in Worms. Four years previously, Luther, in the same town, had stood before the Emperor and the Diet, and single-handed had said, "I cannot recant; here stand I; I can do no other; God help me." God had indeed helped him, and delivered him from those who sought his life, and God was watching over and protecting His servant Tyndale, from all his enemies until his work was done. At Worms he found a printer in Peter Schoeffer who was interested in his work, and soon six thousand copies — three thousand in *octavo,* and three thousand in *quarto*— of the New Testament were on the way to England. Notwithstanding the warning of Dean Cochloeus, the opposition of King Henry, and the hatred of the priests, the books arrived and were distributed all over the country. Then the partisans of Rome took counsel together and issued an edict with the concurrence of the king that "all these books, containing most *pernicious poison, were to be burned.*"

The Bishop of London enjoined all in his diocese who possessed English Testaments to deliver them up under pain of

excommunication, and Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, did likewise. But as Testaments did not come in fast enough to make fires with, they tried a new plan. Large sums of money were expended in buying up all the copies they could lay hands on, and on one occasion nearly a thousand Testaments were burned at St. Paul's Cross. Such was the way the Word of God was treated by the men who called themselves the spiritual guides of the people. Only one complete *octavo* copy of the first edition of Tyndale's Testament is now known to exist; it is treasured in the Baptist College of Bristol. A fragment of the *quarto* edition, printed at Cologne, is also to be seen in the British Museum.

But the bishops had over-reached themselves; the money, that had been spent in buying up the books, only provided the translator with means for printing another and more carefully revised edition. The Dutch printers also, finding it a profitable undertaking, issued several editions on their own account, all of which were successfully shipped to England and Scotland, and eagerly bought up by the people.

In 1534, Tyndale issued a new and revised edition, correcting the various errors which had crept into the text through the ignorance or carelessness of the foreign printers, and this is substantially the same translation as we now possess in our Authorised Version. To this edition was appended a number of expository marginal *glosses* or com-

ments; but in some of these he made more direct application to the abuses of the times, as in 1 Thess. iv. 11, "That ye study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands," he says, "A good lesson for monks and idle friars."

But Tyndale's work was done. Eight years before, he had written, "In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for: no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God's will it shall be so." His enemies, who had long been endeavouring to get him into their power, were now about to be successful. Under the sanguinary Henry VIII. his friends Bilney and Fryth had been cruelly martyred in London. Others, also, had suffered death for being found in possession of a New Testament. But still the books came pouring in. The priests were unable to cope with the evil. The printing press defied them all. So it was decided to bring the translator to the stake, and thus, as they thought, strike at the root of the evil. Needless for us to enter into all the details of the pretended friendship which masked the treachery and cunning employed for this end. Needless to add that Romanism, injustice, and fraud always go together. Suffice it to say, that under the guise of friendship and goodwill, he was decoyed from the house of his friend Poynitz, with whom he was residing in Antwerp, and so skilfully was the treacherous design carried out, that before his friends

knew of his arrest, he was securely lodged in the gloomy dungeons of the Castle of Vilvorde.

The laws of Charles V. against "heretics" in the Low Countries were very concise. "Men were to be beheaded, women *buried alive*, and the relapsed *burned*." Before a Romish tribunal, with such a code of laws to enforce, there was little hope for so illustrious a prisoner as Tyndale. And besides the Emperor's edict, Pierre Dufief, the Procureur-General, was specially anxious to get a conviction against his prisoners, because *he got a share of their confiscated goods*. One who had good reason to know him describes him as a man "whose cruelty was equal to his wickedness." But there was to be some respite. For sixteen months he lingered out a dreary captivity, and during that time we learn that "the power of his doctrine and the sincerity of his life were such that his keeper, the keeper's daughter, and others of his household were converted." Like the Philippian jailer of old, we can imagine Tyndale's keeper alone with his prisoner asking that all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?" and then—his eyes opened to the truth of justification, through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Another—rejoicing in full and free salvation.

Winter was coming on, and Tyndale, sitting alone in darkness and cold, wrote to the Governor of the Castle, "I entreat your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during

the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me, from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head . . . a warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat too is worn out. I wish also his permission to have a candle in the evenings, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study; and in return may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul."

Our sympathies go out to this devoted servant of Christ, in loneliness, darkness, and cold, yet anxious to spend every moment to advance the glory of God. He had previously translated and published the five books of Moses, with the book of Jonah, and now in his prison he set himself with a brave heart to finish the translation of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, and had proceeded as far as the end of the Books of Chronicles when his trial came on. His manuscripts are then said to have been secretly sent to his friend John Rogers, in Antwerp, who finished the books of the Old Testament, and printed a complete edition of of the Scriptures, known as "Matthew's Bible."

Tyndale's trial took place in 1537. His chief accuser was a Dr. Tapper, a determined enemy of Tyndale, and for his share in this judicial murder he was rewarded with the sum of about fifty pounds, and afterwards appointed by the Pope, Chief Inquisitor in the Low Countries. But what will his reward be when "*He* maketh inquisition for blood, who remembereth them, and forgetteth not the cry of the afflicted"?

Among a number of similar charges, Tyndale was accused of having maintained,

That faith alone justifies.

That to believe in the forgiveness of sins, and embrace the mercy of God offered in the Gospel, is sufficient for salvation.

That he denied the existence of purgatory.

That men should neither pray to the Virgin nor the Saints.

Every one of his assertions traversed the traditions of Rome, and for the man who dared to differ there was no toleration. "Confess your errors or die," were the terms of Rome. But Tyndale was little likely to confess. His life had been spent in the cause of Truth, which he loved far better than life itself, and he looked forward to his martyrdom with a calm and steadfast trust in God, knowing it to be the door through which he would pass from earth's troubles to Heaven's rest, and be henceforth at home in "the Father's House."

On Friday, 6th of October 1536, he

was bound to the stake. A rope was passed round his neck, he was first strangled, and then his body burned to ashes. "Lord, open the King of England's eyes," were his last words, and he passed home to his reward.

It is no part of our purpose to enter into the details of the domestic history of the Court of Henry VIII., or of the causes which led to the political breach with Rome. Suffice it to say that two years after Tyndale's death the man who had been the most bigoted and abject worshipper of the pope *to further his own ends*, had become the most determined opposer of the pope and his claims, still *to further his own ends;* and the Bible which Tyndale had devoted his life to give to the people of England, and which the servants of the devil had so earnestly endeavoured to keep from them, was placed by Act of Parliament, and by will of the king, in every Parish Church, and "raised upon a desk so that all might come and read." England was now nominally a protestant country.

Immediately the prohibition was withdrawn, several editions of the Bible were printed in England, and now, all over the wide world, wherever the English tongue is spoken, may be found the result of Tyndale's life-work, that inestimable treasure, the Holy Bible.

But there are still "dark places" in the earth, and many of our fellowmen have never even heard of the Bible. Let us then be stimulated, by what these faithful martyrs of the sixteenth century did

and suffered, to do more ourselves to spread the knowledge of the Grace of God as revealed in the Scriptures. And there are still "dark places" and dark hearts in our own land, for Protestantism is not necessarily Christianity. A man may be a protestant without being a Christian. To protest against evil is merely negative. It is not enough to "*abhor that which is evil,*" we must also "*cleave to that which is good.*"

Christianity does not consist in a series of rites and ceremonies, however Scriptural, but in a real love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the Bible is known and loved, there is Christianity, for the Bible makes known the love of God revealed in the death of His Son.

But how is the Bible treated in this protestant country of ours to-day? It is instructive to notice the character of the opposition of the sixteenth century as compared with that of the nineteenth. *Then* the opponents of the Bible burned the Book, knowing it to be the Word of God, and determined at all costs to keep it from the people. *Now* the opposition to the truth has assumed a more subtle form. The doctrines of the Bible are ignored. The foundation truths of the Atonement, the necessity of the New Birth, and Justification by faith alone, are lost sight of, or disbelieved altogether; while reformation and morality are preached, instead of regeneration and faith. The Romish dogma of "human merit," against which the Christians of the sixteenth century so strenuously fought, has been

resurrected in protestant England in the form of a gospel of "doing your best" as a means to merit God's favour, forgetting that "all our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). We are told by those who profess to be spiritual guides that the facts of creation as related in the Bible are only poetic fancies: that the books of Moses are only a myth: that many of the prophetic books were not written till after their fulfilment. Thus Satan, working behind the vain imaginations of men's minds, is seeking to undermine the authority of the inspired Word of the living God. "But we are not ignorant of his devices." All these things have been foretold by the Spirit, and to the child of God they only indicate that we are living in the "last days," when "men will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from truth, and shall be turned to fables." Amidst all this confusion, Christians are called upon to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life.

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